

**Attachment 1: Draft Toronto Shelter Standards (2015)**

**Acknowledgments**

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**Client Focus Group Participants**

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All client focus groups were conducted anonymously to encourage clients to freely share their thoughts and feedback. Clients provided valuable, thoughtful and honest feedback based on their first-hand experiences with the shelter system. We wish to acknowledge and thank all current and former clients for these contributions

**Project Steering Committee**

---

***Shelter, Support & Housing Administration***

Brad Boucher  
Mark Kim  
Anabella Wainberg

Monica Waldman  
Nicole Williams

**External Service Providers**

---

***The 519 Church Street Community Centre***

Steven Little  
Becky McFarlane

***Christie Refugee Welcome Centre***

Nevenka Dusevic  
Linda Moorcroft  
Lynne Neil

***Canadian Harm Reduction Network***

Craig Stephen

***COTA Health***

Colleen Cook  
Netty Kruger

***Canadian Mental Health Association***

Jessica Lee

***Covenant House***

Laurie Hamilton-Houston  
Desiree Hosking

***Central Toronto Community Health Centre***

Susan Clancy

***Centre for Addiction and Mental Health***

Tara Pearcey  
Laura Pearson

***Egale***

Ty Smith

***Centre for Research on Inner City Health***

I. Alex Abramovich

***Fife House***

Keith Hambly

***Children's Aid Society of Toronto***

Said Dirie

***Fred Victor Centre***

Shannon Soropia

***Habitat Services***

Chris Persaud

***Homeless Hub***

Tanya Gulliver

***Homes First Society***

Justin Ryan

***Inner City Health Associates***

Alexandra Pinto

Leslie Shanks

***John Howard Society***

Greg Rogers

***Kennedy House***

Tracey Hardinge

Renee Lavallee

***Native Men's Residence***

Morris MacDonald

***Office of the Ombudsman***

Kwame Addo

***Rainbow Health Ontario***

Christelle Thibault

Anna Travers

***Red Cross***

Jennifer Patchell

***Red Door***

Dhurata Beqo

Carolyn Burke

Carol Latchford

Jeva Prince

Olga Radovanovich

Amy Secord

***Salvation Army - Florence Booth***

Stephanie Corringham

***Salvation Army - Gateway***

Aida Cabrera-Tello

Mauricio Urtecho

***Salvation Army - Hope Shelter***

Klaus Dimytruk

Carson Durdle

Joanna Martins

George Orfanakos

***Salvation Army - Maxwell Meighen Centre***

David Costello

Nelson Fillier

Cameron Hall

Sinead Harraher

***Salvation Army Toronto Housing and Homeless Supports***

Dion Oxford

Brenda Wootten

***Turning Point Youth Services***

Jill Creamer

Susan Fragis

Debbie Schatia

***Sherbourne Health***

Nadine Idle

***Shelter Provider Reference Group***

***Sojourn House***

Dan Rutembesa

***South Riverdale Community Health Centre***

Michele Heath

***SSHA Harm Reduction Advisory Group***

***St. Stephen's Community House***

Michelle Dixon

Lorie Steer

***Street Haven at the Crossroads***

Bobbie Gunn

**Toronto Community Care Access Centre**  
Barbara Mekinda

**Toronto Hostels Training Centre**  
Ruth Gillson

**University Settlement Resource Centre**  
Tarik Bacchus

**Woman's Habitat of Etobicoke**  
Julia Fiddes  
Silvia Samsa

**YMCA**  
Jeanette Blair

**Youth Shelter Interagency Network**

**Youth Without Shelter**  
Brent Lawson  
Art Tsang

**City of Toronto Staff**

---

**Children's Services**  
Anne Farrell  
Anne Hepditch

**Corporate Information Management Services**  
John Searle

**Equity, Diversity and Human Rights**  
Usma Shakir

**Human Resources**  
Adriana Castelletto

**Legal Services**  
Jane Burton  
Zoya Trofimenko

**Office of Emergency Management**  
Tyler Griffin

**Shelter, Support & Housing Administration**  
Vanita Arora  
Milton Barrera  
Zeny Benedicto  
Deirdre Boyle  
Sally Bryant  
Steve Cassidy  
Lorraine Clarke

Sheila Coad  
Michele Connell  
Trish Cust-Jennings  
Arneil Duzon  
Tom Dykstra  
Tommica Givans  
Sue Goodfellow  
Susan Harris  
Maureen Houlihan  
Hillary Kierstead  
Emily Kovacs  
Wendy Learoyd  
Cordell Llewellyn  
Nina Marinovic  
Rick McNulty  
John Methven  
Nad Milekovic  
Ryan Nagelmakers  
Tony Paulic  
Morag Perkins  
Sunita Persaud  
Laurel Raine  
Arlene Rawson  
Parveen Sachdeva  
Sadick Sam  
Chiquitita Santarromana  
Sandra Sierra  
Hanan Soliman  
Karen Smith  
Debbie Thompson

Ruth White  
Mike Vasiliou  
Viktoriya Zemlyanukhina  
Family Residence Staff Team

***Social Development, Finance &  
Administration***

Mini Alakkatusery

***Toronto Community Housing***

Andrea Austen  
Sulekha Jama  
Kinsey Lewis  
Anne McGregor

***Toronto Public Health***

Owen Chong  
Jasmine Ho  
Shaun Hopkins  
Victory Lall  
Omar Ozaldin  
Rebeca Valyani  
Sandy Zidner

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## **Preamble**

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The City of Toronto has a long history of providing shelter services. For the past three decades, demand for shelter services has gradually increased in response to a steady rise in rates of poverty and a lack of affordable housing within a growing city. Despite these complex factors, the administration and performance of the shelter system has become more proactive, and its services more specialized and flexible in order to meet the changing needs of clients.

The City of Toronto is committed to delivering high-quality services that improve the lives of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In order to fulfill this commitment, the Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS) were created in 1992 to ensure that services are delivered in a consistent manner across the shelter system. The most recent version of the TSS was adopted by City Council in 2002.

The TSS provides City of Toronto-funded shelter providers and clients with a clear set of expectations, guidelines and minimum requirements for the provision of shelter services in Toronto. All emergency and transitional shelters, funded or directly operated by the City of Toronto, are required to adhere to the TSS.

While every effort is made to ensure that the TSS address major governance, operational and service delivery considerations, this document is not exhaustive.

Shelter providers, including their Board of Directors, will consult qualified legal professionals and/or other appropriate advisors about any and all legal and financial obligations related to their operation as a shelter.

Shelter providers and clients that require clarification on a shelter-related matter that is not addressed by the TSS are advised to review the Principles of Service Delivery for guidance and/or contact Hostel Services, Shelter Support and Housing Administration Division (SSHA).

## **1 Policy Context**

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### **1.1 Housing Opportunities Toronto and the Toronto Housing Charter**

*Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT): An Affordable Housing Action Plan* (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources) was adopted by Toronto City Council in 2009. The HOT Plan represents the City's ten-year commitment to actions and investments that will create safe, affordable and well-maintained housing for Toronto's most vulnerable and at-risk individuals and families. The HOT Plan recognizes the important role of the shelter system and the need to enhance shelter services with more appropriate facilities and programs that better meet clients' needs.

A key component of the HOT Plan is the *Toronto Housing Charter* (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources), which is designed to guide Toronto City Council and the Toronto Public Service in the provision of services and programs to residents, including shelter services. It states that fair access to a full range of housing is fundamental to strengthening Toronto's economy, its environmental efforts, and the health and social well-being of its residents and communities.

### **1.2 Housing First**

The Housing First approach to shelter service delivery is premised on the idea that stable housing is a homeless individual's or family's primary need, and that issues such as substance use or mental illness can be better addressed once this need is satisfied.

SSHA employs a Housing First approach in order to transform temporary solutions for those experiencing homelessness into services focused on supporting transitions to permanent, stable forms of housing.

### **1.3 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework**

The *Housing Stability Service Planning Framework* (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources) is SSHA's five-year strategy to help shape the transformation of Toronto housing and homelessness service system. It was unanimously approved by Toronto City Council in December 2013. The objective is to provide shelter and housing services in a client-centered and outcome-focussed manner with housing stability as the ultimate goal.

By setting the minimum requirements for shelter services, the TSS play an important part in fulfilling the following strategic directions of the *Housing Stability Service Planning Framework*

- (a) Strategic Direction 2 – Supporting the Transition to Housing
- (b) Strategic Direction 4 – Fostering System Stewardship and Innovation
- (c) Strategic Direction 5 – Improving Access and Equity
- (d) Strategic Direction 6 – Delivering High Quality Service

## **2 Toronto’s Shelter System**

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### **2.1 Types of Shelters**

The City of Toronto funds purchase of service shelters, and directly operates shelters in two broad categories: emergency and transitional.

Emergency shelters serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness with or without a referral. Clients may self-refer in person or over the phone. The typical length of stay in an emergency shelter is intended to be of short duration and the majority of clients use this type of shelter only once before returning to permanent housing.

Transitional shelters serve individuals and families with a referral from an Emergency shelter, Central Intake, Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre or another agency. Clients cannot self-refer. Transitional shelters provide specialized programming; clients are assessed for suitability prior to admission. The typical length of stay in a Transitional shelter is intended to be longer to enable clients to address their particular housing and service needs.

### **2.2 Sectors of the Shelter System**

Emergency and transitional shelters are further sub-categorized by the client groups they serve; each of these sub-categories is called a sector. Presently, there are five (5) sectors: adult men, adult women, mixed adult (co-ed), youth and family.

### **2.3 Roles, Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **2.3.1 Role of the City of Toronto**

The City of Toronto is the legislated provincial Consolidated Municipal Service Manager responsible for the administration of provincial and federal funding and the planning and management of the housing and homeless service system.

The City of Toronto provides a wide range of housing and homelessness services intended to support all Torontonians to achieve housing stability. Several City divisions are involved, to varying degrees, in the delivery of these services.

SSHA is the division with primary responsibility for increasing housing stability for low-income and vulnerable residents by investing directly in a range of housing and homelessness services designed to help people find and keep permanent housing.

With respect to shelter services, SSHA is responsible for

- (a) Directly operating some Emergency and Transitional shelters

- (b) Administering and ensuring contract compliance with Operating Agreements, between the City of Toronto and community-based organizations that deliver shelter and related services including emergency and transitional shelters, Housing Help programs within shelters, the Toronto Hostel Training Centre and the Out of the Cold program
- (c) Ensuring service quality assurance by maintaining and providing funder oversight for the implementation of the TSS by shelter providers
- (d) Developing policies that improve the shelter system's efficiency and capacity to generate positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

### 2.3.2 Role of Shelter Providers

The role of shelter providers is to deliver high-quality services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness while fulfilling the obligations set out in their Operating Agreements and the TSS.

City-funded shelter providers operate a majority of the shelters in Toronto. SSHA relies on their operational contributions as well as their knowledge, skills and experiences. These serve as critical inputs to the development and refinement of system-wide policies and service delivery leading practices.

## 2.4 Quality Assurance

SSHA undertakes a number of activities and uses a variety of tools to ensure that shelter providers deliver services in an effective and efficient manner.

SSHA conducts audits/reviews of shelter providers' operations and is primarily concerned with

- (a) Ensuring that shelter providers meet the TSS and their contractual obligations as set out in their Operating Agreement
- (b) Reviewing shelter providers' financial viability, including completed budget submissions and service delivery performance
- (c) Providing information and assistance to shelter providers with respect to shelters' budgets, policies, services and business processes
- (d) Monitoring, reviewing and resolving complaints from clients and the community.

Audits and reviews focus on shelter providers' services, bed management practices, budget and related submissions, financial controls, capital assets and organizational/administrative functions. They are conducted at regular intervals and as needed.

#### 2.4.1 Program Reviews

Program Reviews are conducted to ensure that shelter providers are in compliance with the TSS in order to ensure high-quality service delivery to clients. Program reviews typically focus on models and processes.

#### 2.4.2 Site Reviews

Site Reviews are conducted to ensure that shelter providers' buildings are well-maintained and that their infrastructure and capital assets are in a state of good repair. The primary purpose of a Site Review is to ensure the health and safety of all persons on shelter property.

#### 2.4.3 Organizational Reviews

Organizational Reviews are conducted to ensure that shelter providers' finances are in good standing and that their governance and administrative functions comply with the TSS. Shelter providers may be required to demonstrate to SSHA their compliance with applicable legislation and generally accepted professional practices.

Organizational Reviews are often combined with Program and Site Reviews as part of a comprehensive evaluation of shelter operations.

#### 2.4.4 Shelter Monitoring Plan

SSHA implements a Shelter Monitoring Plan on a case-by-case basis when there are concerns that a shelter provider is not meeting its contractual obligations, including meeting the TSS. A Shelter Monitoring Plan is implemented in response to difficulties arising from poor financial controls, service-level disruptions, frequent and severe complaints against a shelter and/or its staff or significant damage to a shelter's physical assets that impact on the shelter's ability to provide service and require remediation. SSHA develops and administers Shelter Monitoring Plans in consultation with the shelter provider to determine how the shelter provider will proceed with remediation while delivering the best possible services to clients.

#### 2.4.5 Updating the Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS)

In order to maintain the relevance of the TSS to the evolving realities of shelter service delivery, the TSS are subject to amendment.

Every five (5) years, SSHA will facilitate a formal and collaborative process to seek input and proposals for amendments from shelter providers, current/former clients of the shelter system, City staff from a variety of divisions and other stakeholders.

Proposed amendments to the TSS will be reviewed by SSHA in consultation with shelter providers to determine their feasibility and impact on shelter services. A broader public consultation on the proposed amendments may take place after the shelter provider review.

Amendments to the TSS are subject to approval from the General Manager of SSHA and City Council. The approved TSS document will be updated in a fully accessible format and reposted on the SSHA website.

SSHA reserves the right to introduce interim amendments to the TSS outside of the regularly scheduled amendment process via Hostel Services Directives.

#### 2.4.6 Shelter Management Information System (SMIS)

SMIS is a secure, web-based application used to collect, store and retrieve client information and to facilitate efficient access to shelter services by identifying available beds in real time. The use of SMIS is mandatory at all City-funded shelters.

The analysis of SMIS information provides valuable insights for policy development, shelter system planning and for the preparation for Program, Site and/or Organizational Reviews.

### **3 Defined Terms**

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The following definitions reflect the meanings of terms as they are used in the implementation and operation of the TSS. Defined terms are linked to this section throughout the TSS so that clicking on a defined term will bring you to its definition. For further clarification of these or related terms, please contact SSHA.

#### **Abstinence-based Shelter**

A shelter that prohibits the use of alcohol, illicit drugs or misuse of substances as part of their service model, or a shelter that limits its service to clients who choose not to use or be exposed to alcohol, illicit drugs or clients who misuse substances (see also Harm Reduction).

#### **Admission**

The process of admitting a client to a bedded program by using SMIS to assign a client to a bed.

#### **Alternative Sleeping Arrangement**

Any temporary sleeping arrangement that is not in a designated sleeping area, but is otherwise appropriate and safe (e.g., allowing a client to temporarily sleep on a cot or couch in a supervised area of the shelter).

#### **Bedded Program**

A shelter program that includes overnight sleeping accommodations in addition to other support services.

#### **Board**

Refers to the volunteer Board of Directors of a shelter provider.

#### **Capital Reserve Fund**

An account kept by a shelter provider for the purpose of financing the replacement or repair of capital assets, including but not limited to building components and systems.

#### **Child**

For the purpose of determining shelter service eligibility, a person who is 15 years of age or less.

#### **Cleaning/Maintenance Staff**

Shelter staff who are involved in the cleaning or maintenance of a shelter facility, including but not limited to cleaners, custodians, maintenance workers, handypersons and superintendents.

#### **Client**

Any individual who is in receipt of any kind of support services provided by a shelter (see also Resident).

#### **Client Support Staff**

Shelter staff who provide counseling, case management or support for clients, including but not limited to counselor, client service worker, case worker, housing help worker and social worker.

**Conflict of Interest**

A situation in which private interests or personal considerations may affect a person's judgment in acting in the best interest of their organization or client. It includes using a person's power derived from a position of authority, confidential information, time during working hours, material or facilities for private gain or advancement or the expectation of private gain or advancement. A conflict may occur when an interest benefits the person, any member of the person's family, friends or business associates.

**Curfew**

A pre-determined time by which clients must be physically present within a shelter. Curfew is a tool for managing available beds in the shelter that allows shelter providers to assign an unoccupied bed to an incoming clients (see also Held Bed, Occupied Bed and Leave with Permission).

**Dietary Staff**

Shelter staff who are involved in the handling, storage, planning, preparation or serving of food or meals, including but not limited to kitchen staff, cooks, dietitians, nutritionists and servers.

**Discharge**

The process of concluding a client's stay at a shelter, including the use of SMIS to release a client's assigned bed (see also Planned Discharge and Unplanned Discharge).

**Discrimination**

An action or decision that treats an individual or group negatively and/or denies social participation and/or human rights for reasons that include, but are not limited to, an individual's or group's perceived or actual: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, the receipt of public assistance, substance use, medical status, mental health status, physical appearance or hygiene (see also Homophobia and Transphobia).

**Emergency Shelter**

A shelter that is accessible by any individual or family experiencing homelessness with or without a referral, with the intention of providing short-term accommodation and the support services required to move clients into housing (see also Transitional Shelter).

**Emotional Support Animal**

A companion animal that provides comfort, emotional support or therapeutic benefit, such as alleviating or mitigating some symptoms of a mental or psychiatric disability (see also Service Animal).

**Extreme Weather Alert**

An official alert issued by the City of Toronto's Medical Officer of Health when the outdoor temperature is likely to cause detrimental effects on human health. These alerts can be issued when the temperature reaches a prescribed threshold that is either very high (i.e., Heat Alert, Extreme Heat Alert) or very low (i.e., Cold Alert, Extreme Cold Weather Alert).



**Gender Expression**

How a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender.

**Gender Identity**

A person's subjective experience of their own gender which may not match their biological sex or physical appearance.

**Harm Reduction**

Harm reduction is both a philosophy and set of practical strategies aimed at reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences associated with substance use (both legal and illegal) in ways that are non-judgmental and non-coercive. Harm reduction may include Abstinence-based Shelter programs providing a client with the choice to participate or seek other forms of treatment or support. Harm reduction benefits people who use substances, their families, and the community (see also Abstinence-based Shelter, Safer Crack Smoking Equipment, Safer Injection Equipment and Safer Sex Products).

**Held Bed**

A bed that has been assigned to a client who is not physically present in a shelter. Beds may be held for incoming clients or clients who are on an approved absence from a shelter (see also Curfew, Occupied Bed and Leave with Permission).

**Homophobia**

When a person expresses rage, hate, and/or disapproval of homosexuality. Homophobia can be manifested in verbal or physical attacks (see also Discrimination and Transphobia).

**Hostel Services Directive**

A communication bulletin notifying shelter providers of new service requirements or prescribed action(s) required under the authority of the Operating Agreement, TSS, City Council resolution or other legislation. Hostel Services Directives may also be used to clarify an existing shelter standard or to issue interim service requirements or standard(s).

**Housing First**

A service approach that focuses on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and then connecting them to supports and services as needed in order to stabilize their housing.

**Incident**

Any occurrence or event that takes place on shelter premises or involves active shelter clients or staff which may compromise the health, safety or well-being of those involved (see also Serious Occurrence).

**Intake**

The process of assessing a client's needs, eligibility and suitability for shelter service and recording the results of the assessment in SMIS.

**Leave with Permission**

Authorized overnight leave to allow a client to spend nights away from a shelter while holding their bed (see also Curfew, Held Bed and Occupied Bed).

**LGBTQ2S**

An acronym that refers collectively to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning and two-spirited people. While terms and identities frequently change and more inclusive acronyms may be introduced elsewhere (e.g., LGBTQQIP2SAA, LBGQTQIA), LGBTQ2S will be used as an all encompassing term in the TSS (see also Two-spirited People).

**Management Staff**

Shelter staff who are involved in supervising or managing other shelter staff or programs, including, but not limited to shift leaders, supervisors, managers, senior managers and executive directors.

**Medication**

Any prescribed or over-the-counter substance used to treat disease, injury or relieve pain, including but not limited to medicine, drugs, supplements and remedies (see also Opioid).

**Methadone**

A synthetic opioid used most commonly to treat addiction to other opioid drugs such as heroin, oxycodone (e.g., Percodan, Percocet), fentanyl (e.g., Duragesic, Sublimaze) and hydromorphone (e.g., Dilaudid) (see also Opioid).

**Occupied Bed**

A bed that has been assigned to a client as indicated in SMIS when the final bed count is conducted, including clients who are temporarily out of their beds but are present elsewhere in a shelter during the final bed count, and clients on an approved Leave with Permission (see also Curfew, Held Bed and Leave with Permission).

**Operating Agreement**

A contract between the City of Toronto and a not-for-profit organization that sets out the terms and conditions of providing services on behalf of the City to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

**Opioid**

A class of powerful drugs that are primarily prescribed to treat severe pain. Opioids include illicit drugs such as heroin as well as prescription medications such as Percocet, morphine and codeine. Opioids are an effective medication when used as prescribed, but carry a risk of addiction because of their powerful effects. Opioids are also referred to as narcotics (see also Methadone).

**Planned Discharge**

A voluntary or anticipated discharge that results from a client meeting the goals of their service plan or to facilitate a client's transfer to housing or more appropriate programs/supports (see also Discharge and Unplanned Discharge).

**Resident**

A client who has been admitted to a shelter's bedded program (see also Client). A separate definition of resident applies in the context of reporting a death of a shelter resident and is found in the Death of a Shelter Resident Guidebook (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources).

**Safer Crack Smoking Equipment**

Equipment used to help people who smoke crack cocaine to reduce the potential harm to themselves (e.g., to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases). Safer crack smoking equipment may include Pyrex stems, brass screens, chop sticks and mouthpieces (see also Harm reduction).

**Safer Injection Equipment**

Equipment used to help people who inject drugs to reduce the potential harm to themselves (e.g., to prevent the transmission of blood-borne diseases). Safer injection equipment may include syringes in various sizes and brands, sterile water, alcohol swabs, tourniquets, filters, acidifiers and cookers (see also Harm Reduction).

**Safer Sex Products**

Products used to help individuals reduce the potential harm (e.g., to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases) associated with sexual practices. Safer sex products may include condoms and lubes (see also Harm Reduction).

**Savings Program**

A financial support program focussed on assisting clients to actively save funds in support of their service plan goals (e.g., housing). Savings programs have elements of a safekeeping program (e.g., holding client valuables), but has more controls and documentation requirements in order to accurately account for clients' savings.

**Serious Occurrence**

An event that compromises the health and safety of a shelter and/or its occupants including, but not limited to any incident that involves death, fire, serious assaults, serious accidental injuries, attempted suicide requiring acute medical attention or the possession or use of a weapon (see also Incident).

**Service Animal**

An animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability (see also Emotional Support Animal).

**Service Disruption**

A situation that renders a shelter unable to provide its regular services and/or maintain a high standard of service delivery. Service disruptions can be either planned (e.g., renovations scheduled weeks or months in advance) or unplanned (e.g., structural damage to a shelter building that results from severe weather).

**Service Plan**

A formally documented, individualized plan for a client that sets out the client's objectives, responsibilities and the course(s) of action necessary to help the client to achieve their goals. Service plans may include sub-components (or sub-plans) depending on the needs of a client (see also Support Services).

**Service Restriction**

Restricting a client's access to shelter services for a limited length of time due to a particular incident or behaviour.

**Shelter Provider**

A not-for-profit organization that is contracted by SSHA to provide shelter services through an Operating Agreement or shelter services that are directly operated by SSHA.

**Shelter Staff**

Employees of a shelter provider.

**SMIS**

The Shelter Management Information Systems is a secure, web-based application used to collect, store and retrieve client information and to facilitate efficient access to shelter services by identifying available beds in real time, case management and service planning. The use of SMIS is mandatory at all City-funded shelters.

**Support Services**

Any program or service offered by a shelter provider or service provider to help clients meet their goals or needs including, but not limited to a shelter's bedded program, meal program, housing help services, employment program, etc. (see also Service Plan).

**Transgender**

A person whose gender identity or gender expression does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. A transgender person may not feel the need to physically change their body. Transgender will be used as an umbrella term to include clients who identify as genderqueer, two-spirited or gender non-conforming for the purposes of the TSS.

**Transitional Shelter**

A shelter that is accessible, by referral only, to eligible individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with the intention of providing longer-term accommodation and specialized supports required to move clients into housing. Transitional shelter providers are designated as such in their Operating Agreement (see also Emergency Shelter).

**Transphobia**

Feelings of rage, hate and disapproval towards transgender people or people who are gender-nonconforming. Transphobia can be manifested in verbal and physical attacks (see also Discrimination and Homophobia).

**Two-spirited People**

This term is culturally specific to North American Aboriginal communities and refers to queer Aboriginal people who identify with both a male and female spirit. This term is not exclusive to gender identity and can also refer to sexual orientation (see also LGBTQ2S).

**Unplanned Discharge**

An involuntary or unanticipated discharge that results from a client's unilateral decision to discontinue receiving service from a shelter (e.g., failure to return) or a service restriction (see also Discharge and Planned Discharge).

**Weapon**

Any object that is used or intended to be used to cause harm to a person or threaten harm to a person.

**Youth**

For the purpose of determining shelter service eligibility, a person who is between 16 and 24 years of age, inclusive.

## **4 Applicable Legislation**

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Shelter providers are responsible to ensure that they comply with all relevant aspects of applicable federal, provincial and municipal legislation/regulations.

The legislation/regulations listed in section 4.1 (Federal Legislation), section 4.2 (Provincial Legislation), section 4.3 (Municipal Legislation) is not intended to be exhaustive. Shelter providers are responsible to review the legislation and keep themselves informed, as it is amended from time to time.

In the event of any legal conflict between the TSS and applicable legislation, the applicable legislation shall prevail to the extent of the conflict.

Shelter providers will comply with reference standards, directives, policies and guidelines prescribed by SSHA including, but not limited to, those listed in section 4.4 Standards, Policies and Guidelines.

Shelter providers, including their Board of Directors, will consult qualified legal professionals and/or other appropriate advisors about any and all legal and financial obligations related to their operation as a shelter.

### **4.1 Federal Legislation**

[Cribs, Cradles and Bassinets Regulations \(SOR/2010-261\)](#) (made under the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act, 2010)

### **4.2 Provincial Legislation**

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)

[Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)

[Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)

[Child and Family Services Act, 1990](#)

[Employment Standards Act, 2000](#)

[Regulation 213/07: Fire Code](#) (made under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1990)

[Regulation 562/90: Food Premise Regulations](#) (made under the Health Promotion and Protection Act, 1990)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990](#)

[Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004](#)

[Residential Tenancies Act, 2006](#)

[Regulation 517/06: Maintenance Standards](#)

[Regulation 220/01: Boilers and Pressure Vessels](#) (made under the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000)

[Regulation 209/01: Elevating Devices](#) (made under the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000)

[Regulation 1101: First Aid Requirements](#) (made under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997)

#### **4.3 [Municipal Legislation](#)**

[Municipal Shelter By-Law No. 138-2003](#)

[Municipal Code, Chapter 629 – Property Standards](#)

#### **4.4 [Standards, Policies and Guidelines](#)**

[Canada Food Guide](#)

[Environmental Control Best Practices: Guidelines to Reduce TB Transmission in Homeless Shelters and Drop-In Centres](#)

## **5 Principles of Service Delivery**

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The Principles of Service Delivery are designed to guide shelter providers in their decision making and to promote the good governance of the shelter system. The Principles are particularly helpful in the event that the TSS are unclear or silent on an issue in question. Shelter staff will refer to the Principles in such circumstances to inform their actions, decision making or service approach.

### **5.1 Respect and Dignity**

Shelter service delivery is based on accepting and respecting the inherent dignity, diversity, experiences and abilities of all individuals.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Create and maintain an atmosphere of dignity, acceptance and respect for all individuals
- (b) Respect and balance the independence, values, knowledge, abilities and diversity of all individuals
- (c) Provide services to each client in a non-judgmental manner, free from discrimination and harassment
- (d) Protect and promote the health, safety and security of all individuals
- (e) Protect the personal and health information and privacy of all individuals.

### **5.2 Client-Centered Service**

Shelter services focus on clients' needs and empower them to collaborate in the development and implementation of a Service Plan. As much as possible, clients' preferences and their feedback about the services they receive are meaningfully considered and acted upon when appropriate.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Work collaboratively with each client to develop a Service Plan that enables the achievement of a client's goals as they relate to housing stability
- (b) Ensure that a client's Service Plan and the support services they receive focus on recognizing and building upon a client's strengths and capacities
- (c) Provide services grounded in the principles of Harm Reduction that are responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of clients
- (d) Provide services using a trauma-informed approach that takes into account an understanding of trauma in all aspects of service delivery and places priority on the client's safety, choice, and control



- (e) Ensure that staff work collaboratively to share any necessary and relevant information about a client's situation in support of the client's Service Plan in a manner that is respectful of the client and their privacy
- (f) Provide clients with access to clear and accurate information that allows them to make informed decisions
- (g) Provide clients with opportunities to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of Support Services and the policies that govern them.

### **5.3 Housing First**

Housing is a basic human need. All persons deserve safe, secure, affordable and well-maintained housing. The focus of shelter service delivery is to help clients find and maintain housing that is consistent with their Service Plan.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Work collaboratively with clients to find suitable housing as identified in the client's Service Plan
- (b) Work collaboratively with clients to provide them with the appropriate supports and referrals that will help them achieve and maintain housing stability.

### **5.4 Access to Shelter Services**

All persons have the right to seek shelter services.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Ensure that information about their shelter(s) and the various ways to obtain services is understandable, available through various means and accessible to people with disabilities
- (b) Work toward eliminating real or perceived barriers that prevent or inhibit client access to shelter services
- (c) Not use immigration status as a basis to deny newcomers to Canada access to shelter services.

## **5.5 Service Quality**

High-quality service delivery relies on clear, achievable and measurable outcomes.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Ensure that services focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for each client
- (b) Meet or exceed service performance targets prescribed by SSHA
- (c) Commit to continuous, self-evaluation and improvement of the services they deliver, based on evidence and leading practice(s)
- (d) Be accountable to all of their stakeholders for all of their operations
- (e) Ensure that their shelter's capital assets and infrastructure are kept in a state of good repair in order to maintain a safe, healthy and accessible physical environment.

## **5.6 Collaboration, Community Engagement and Partnerships**

Community engagement and partnerships are essential to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the shelter system.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Collaborate with clients, service providers and other stakeholders to create and maintain a network of supports in order to achieve the best outcomes for clients and the neighbourhoods in which they receive services and/or reside
- (b) Develop and maintain a respectful and responsive relationship with the neighbourhood in which their shelter is located and with the wider community.

## **6 Client Rights and Responsibilities**

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Shelter providers will have Board-approved Client Rights and Responsibilities, including a Client Code of Conduct, which will be posted in conspicuous areas of the shelter.

At a minimum, clients have the right to

- (a) Expect that shelter staff will follow the TSS
- (b) Be treated in a non-judgmental and respectful way
- (c) Participate in a fair and clear complaint and appeal process without fear of reprisal
- (d) Provide feedback about current and potential shelter policies and services and the way services are delivered
- (e) Be active participants in the identification of their housing and related goals
- (f) Receive support from shelter staff to achieve their housing and related goals
- (g) Be given clear and accurate information in order to make informed decisions about the support services they receive
- (h) Receive assistance from shelter staff with understanding information that is presented to them and with completing forms or other paperwork
- (i) Request and receive access to their personal and health information that is collected and stored by the shelter
- (j) Have their personal and health information and privacy protected to the extent that legislation allows
- (k) Contact Hostel Services directly for information about the shelter system and to provide feedback about their service experience.

Clients will

- (a) Follow the rules of the shelter
- (b) Treat all individuals with respect
- (c) Respect the property of the shelter, clients, staff, volunteers, visitors and members of the neighbourhood in which the shelter is located
- (d) Work collaboratively with shelter staff to develop a Service Plan and to work toward achieving the goals set out in the Service Plan.

Clients will not

- (a) Discriminate against any individual or group of individuals
- (b) Engage in violent, abusive or harassing behaviour
- (c) Impose personal beliefs or standards on others.

## **7 Client Input**

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Client input will be sought in all areas of program planning, program development, policy development and program evaluation in multiple ways, including but not limited to exit interviews, discharge surveys, one-on-one interviews, client surveys, client focus groups and/or residents' meetings.

Shelter providers will hold a minimum of one (1) residents' meeting monthly to obtain residents' opinions and input about shelter operations and proposed policy or program changes.

- (a) Notice of a residents' meeting must be posted in conspicuous areas of the shelter at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting.
- (b) Residents will be encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings.
- (c) Minutes must be recorded at these meetings and the minutes and resolutions to any concerns or issues raised must be posted in an area accessible to residents within two (2) weeks of the meeting, and remain posted until the next residents' meeting.

Shelter providers will assist SSHA in its implementation of any system-wide survey of shelter clients.

## **8 Complaints and Appeals**

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Shelter providers will respond professionally and appropriately to all complaints from all individuals.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding complaints and appeals, including how complaints can be made at the shelter level, how complaints will be investigated and resolved, and any subsequent escalation or appeal processes, including escalating a complaint to SSHA when all other options have been exhausted
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA and resubmit a copy whenever the documents are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Offer a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

Shelter providers must inform clients of this process, post their complaint and appeals process in a conspicuous area of the shelter, keep a written record of formal complaints and a written record of the resolution of formal complaints.

Complaints are a valuable source of information about a shelter's performance and can highlight areas for improvement. Shelter providers will collect, analyze and evaluate all complaints and take any necessary corrective action.

Shelter providers will provide the contact information for SSHA to any client who has exhausted a shelter's complaints and appeals process, remains dissatisfied with the resolution, and who wishes to escalate their complaint or appeal further.

Shelter providers will provide the contact information for SSHA to any individual who wishes to make a complaint about a City of Toronto or SSHA program, service or responsibility.

Shelter providers will provide the contact information for the Office of the Ombudsman to any individual who wishes to make a complaint about a City of Toronto or SSHA program, service or responsibility.

## **9 Shelter Access and Customer Service**

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Shelter providers will promote a high and consistent level of customer service by responding to requests for support services in a respectful, empathetic and timely manner.

Shelter providers with a website must post key contact information, and clear directions to the shelter location, unless exempted by SSHA.

Shelter providers must be able to respond to requests for support services made by phone or in person.

Shelter providers will endeavor to have a staff person respond to phone-based requests for service in real time.

Shelter providers must have an automated voicemail system capable of storing incoming messages and relaying key information to any caller requesting service who does not reach a staff person in real time. At a minimum, an automated outgoing message will include

- (a) The shelter's name and client group(s) it serves
- (b) Clear direction to callers regarding when their call will be returned by shelter staff
- (c) Direction to contact Toronto 311 if the caller requires a more immediate response to their request for support services
- (d) Direction to call 911 if the caller is in danger or in need of emergency services (e.g., paramedics, police, fire).

### **9.1 Intake/Assessment**

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved access/intake policy and procedures that include assessing clients for program eligibility, responding to service requests not resulting in a SMIS intake and explaining the collection of personal information
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Offer a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

An intake in SMIS must be completed in real time for every client that requests support services.

Shelter providers that coordinate access to their services solely through Central Intake are not required to complete intakes for clients.

Shelter providers, Central Intake and the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre will conduct an initial assessment (i.e., a client screening procedure) in order to determine the service need(s), and related accessibility requirements or accommodation (i.e., modified service requirements) needs of a client.

Shelter providers will ask all clients about their gender identity rather than assume.

Shelter providers will support the choices of transgender clients to gain access to sleeping areas in the gender that the client identifies with and that will best preserve their safety and dignity.

In instances where transgender clients express concerns about the preservation of their safety or dignity, shelter providers will accommodate the client's request for a bed in a gender-neutral/private room, if possible, or in a male or female sleeping area regardless of their gender identity.

Shelter providers will not request or collect immigration status information in order to determine service eligibility as part of a shelter's intake process, unless approved by SSHA.

Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to accommodate a client with a disability.

Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to accommodate clients accompanied by service animals or emotional support animals.

Shelter providers that cannot accommodate clients with a disability or clients accompanied by a service animal or an emotional support animal will make a referral to an accessible shelter and offer appropriate transportation assistance, as described under section 9.2 Referrals.

Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to accommodate clients accompanied by their pet.

Shelter providers that cannot accommodate clients accompanied by their pet will make a referral to another shelter, and offer appropriate transportation assistance, as described under section 9.2 Referrals.

## **9.2 Referrals**

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for referrals
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Provide a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.



Shelter providers who are not able to admit a client to their bedded program or provide the requested support services will refer the client to another shelter with space in an appropriate bedded program or to more suitable support services.

If a client is provided a referral over the phone, shelter staff will relay clear directions to the client in order for him/her to reach his/her destination as easily as possible.

When referring clients to a bedded program at another shelter, the referring shelter will

- (a) Review SMIS information regarding bed availability at the receiving shelter
- (b) Confirm by phone with the receiving shelter that a bed is available
- (c) Complete the referral in SMIS in real time.

If the referral is not to a bedded program, the disposition of the referral will be recorded in SMIS in real time and the referred client will be given the necessary information to contact the appropriate support services.

When referring a client to the appropriate support services, shelter providers, Central Intake and the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre will take a client's preferences into account as much as possible.

When arranging the referral of a client with health issues from one shelter to another, shelter staff will first communicate the health needs of the client to the receiving shelter, with consent from the client, to ensure that the receiving shelter is able to accommodate the client prior to executing the referral.

Shelter staff will offer transportation assistance to a referred client, taking into account any client limitations (e.g., mobility, visual impairment) and safety considerations.

When a shelter provider does not have a vacancy in their bedded program or other circumstances limit a shelter provider's ability to complete a referral, the referring shelter provider will

- (a) Transfer phone requests to Central Intake or provide the client with Central Intake's contact information
- (b) Assist an in-person client to contact the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre, provide directions or transportation assistance and notify the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre of the client's pending arrival.

### **9.3 Admission**

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for admission

- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Provide a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

Following the principles of harm reduction, admission decisions will not be based on a client's substance use.

Emergency shelter providers will admit clients to their bedded program at any time during their hours of operation when

- (a) There is an available bed in their shelter
- (b) The client identifies as a member of the particular client group served by the shelter
- (c) There are no active service restrictions for the client at the admitting shelter.

Shelter providers will record admissions in SMIS in real time.

Shelter providers will support the choices of transgender clients to gain access to sleeping areas in the gender that the client identifies with and that will best preserve their safety and dignity. In instances where transgender clients express concerns about the preservation of their safety or dignity, shelter providers will accommodate the client's request for a bed in a gender-neutral/private room, if possible, or in a male or female sleeping area regardless of their gender identity.

Shelter providers will not request or collect immigration status information in order to determine service eligibility as part of a shelter's admission process, unless approved by SSHA.

Shelter providers may deny admission in cases where

- (a) There is an active service restriction for the client at the admitting shelter
- (b) A client's behaviour could compromise the health and safety of the client or other individuals within the shelter.

Shelter providers will record all denials of admission in the referral notes in SMIS in real time, and refer the client to another shelter or appropriate service and offer appropriate transportation assistance, as described under section 9.2 Referrals.

Shelter orientation information will be provided to all clients upon admission or as soon as possible, and no later than twenty-four (24) hours after their admission. At a minimum, shelter orientation information will include

- (a) Shelter rules
- (b) Curfew information
- (c) Meal time information
- (d) Nearby amenities (e.g., stores, community centre, library, drop-ins, etc.)
- (e) Health and Safety information including key aspects of a shelter's emergency plan and evacuation plan and identifying emergency exits
- (f) Client rights and responsibilities
- (g) Service restriction information
- (h) The process for making a complaint.

A tour of the shelter will be offered to all admitted clients. Tours for interested clients will be arranged as soon as reasonably possible and no later than forty-eight (48) hours after their admission.

#### 9.3.1 Queue Administration and Held Beds

Transitional shelter providers and family shelter providers are exempt from all requirements of section 9.3.1 Queue Administration and Held Beds.

Specialized programs such as harm reduction programs may be exempt from all requirements of section 9.3.1 Queue Administration and Held Beds with prior approval from SSHA.

Shelter providers will hold beds for incoming clients for a maximum of two (2) hours.

Shelter providers may grant extensions beyond the maximum hold time under extenuating circumstances (e.g., employment obligations, client appointments or lengthy travel time to the shelter) or as approved by the shelter.

Shelter providers will document approved extensions to the maximum hold time in SMIS in real time but no later than two (2) hours after granting the extension.

Shelter staff will inform incoming clients of the maximum hold time (or the time that an approved extension will expire) and the potential loss of bed resulting from late arrival.

If an incoming client does not arrive within the maximum hold time or prior to the expiry time of the approved extension, shelter providers will release the held bed and clear their SMIS queue immediately.

Queue clearing must be done on a regularly scheduled basis and a minimum of four (4) times per shift during a shelter's hours of operation.

### 9.3.2 Curfew

Transitional shelter providers and family shelter providers are exempt from all requirements of section 9.3.2 Curfew.

Specialized programs such as harm reduction programs may be exempt from all requirements of section 9.3.2 Curfew with prior approval from SSHA.

Shelter providers will inform all clients of the curfew time and the unplanned discharge that may result from missed curfew.

In the adult and youth Emergency shelter sector, beds must not be held after curfew unless a client's service plan requires it, or unless the client has made prior arrangements with staff and has received permission to be late in order to attend school, volunteer work, shift work (including sex work), counselling, peer group, health/medical treatment, family reunification, cultural, religious, or family obligations.

If a client is approved to return after a shelter's curfew but fails to return or contact the shelter by the agreed upon time, the client may be discharged.

In the event that a shelter provider receives a request for a bed after curfew and before 4:00 a.m. and the shelter provider is unable to accommodate or refer the presenting client to another shelter, Central Intake or the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre, the shelter provider will either

- (a) Discharge clients that have not returned for curfew or made other arrangements, and release the bed for use by the presenting client
- (b) If the bed cannot be prepared for use at this time, the shelter provider will intake and admit the new client and offer an alternative sleeping arrangement.

Shelter providers will transfer a client who is assigned to an alternative sleeping arrangement to an unoccupied bed in their shelter at the earliest opportunity, or offer to refer the client to another shelter as soon as possible in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

### 9.3.3 Occupied Bed

Transitional shelter providers and family shelter providers are exempt from all requirements of section 9.3.3 Occupied Bed.

Specialized programs such as harm reduction programs may be exempt from all requirements of section 9.3.3 Occupied Bed with prior approval from SSHA.

Shelter providers will conduct regular rounds to monitor the occupancy of their shelter, at a minimum of two (2) rounds per shift and immediately release unoccupied beds in order to facilitate access for other clients seeking a shelter bed.

Shelter providers will mark the final number of occupied beds at 4:00 a.m. on a hard copy of the SMIS-generated bed log, which must be signed by the authorized staff and stored appropriately.

#### 9.3.4 Leave with Permission

Shelter providers may authorize a Leave with Permission in response to extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical emergency or funeral) or as part of a client's service plan (e.g., improving their housing situation, overnight visits to family to support the goal of family reunification, custody agreements, etc).

Leaves with Permission that do not require prior approval by SSHA will

- (a) Be limited to exceptional/emergency circumstances or part of a client's service plan
- (b) Not exceed four (4) consecutive days
- (c) Be authorized by a shelter's Executive Director or designate.

For requests that exceed four (4) consecutive days, shelter providers will submit a completed Leave with Permission request form (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates) to seek approval from SSHA.

SSHA approvals for Leave with Permission requests may be sought in each instance that a request is made by a client, or sought once for a series of requests if multiple, regularly scheduled leaves are required by a client's service plan.

Approved Leave with Permission requests must be documented in SMIS in real time, and will include

- (a) Reason for leave
- (b) Date and time leave approved to begin
- (c) Expected date/time of return
- (d) Name of approver.

Vacated emergency shelter beds that result from approved Leaves with Permission will be treated as an available bed and assigned to clients seeking a shelter bed.

Upon the return of the client who was granted the leave, shelter providers will transfer the client who was assigned to the vacated bed to an unoccupied bed in their shelter, or offer to refer the client to another shelter in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

### 9.3.5 Length of Stay

There is no prescribed limit to the length of time a client may stay in an emergency shelter. Lengths of stay will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Shelter staff will use the benchmark of ninety (90) days as a trigger for initiating a reassessment of a client's service plan.

### 9.3.6 Daytime Access

Shelter providers that do not normally provide service during the day will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for daytime access that, at a minimum, allows access to sleeping areas for clients who work overnight shifts (including sex work), are ill but not in need of medical care, or require daytime access as part of the service plan
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Provide a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

Shelter providers may request that a client, who is ill and requesting daytime access to a sleeping area, produce a note from the client's physician.

Shelter providers that are unable to provide daytime access to sleeping areas will offer to arrange a referral to a shelter or other program that provides daytime access to a sleeping area. The referral must be completed in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

## 9.4 Discharge

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for planned and unplanned discharges that include how clients retrieve their belongings and how unclaimed client belongings will be stored, handled and/or disposed
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Provide a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

Abstinence-based shelter providers may discharge and/or issue a service restriction to a client who breaks shelter rules or policies regarding substance use in a manner that complies with requirements under section 9.4 Discharge and section 9.4.2 Service Restrictions.

Abstinence-based shelter providers will refer a discharged and/or service restricted client to another shelter or appropriate support services in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

Shelter providers will record discharges in SMIS in real time.

#### 9.4.1 Planned Discharges

To the extent that a client is able to participate in developing a discharge plan, a client will be discharged with such a plan in place (e.g., to housing, to treatment, to hospital) wherever possible.

As part of a client's planned discharge and transition out of a shelter, shelter staff will

- (a) Provide information and assistance to clients regarding resources relevant to the next stage of their service plan, including service and key personal supports
- (b) Review consent forms and summarize information for the client or next service provider to assist in ensuring continuity of service in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 12.6.4 Sharing/Disclosure of Client Information
- (c) For up to twelve (12) months following discharge from the shelter, and at the request of the client, provide follow-up services or referrals to help support a client's transition to housing, provide crisis support or provide eviction prevention activities.

Exceptions are permitted in cases of unplanned discharge, which may result from

- (a) A failure to return to shelter by curfew
- (b) A service restriction from the shelter's bedded program.

#### 9.4.2 Service Restrictions

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for bedded program service restrictions, including an appeals process
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Provide a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

Transitional shelter providers that utilize rental agreements as part of their service model will adhere to eviction processes described under the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and

administered by the Landlord and Tenant Board. Accordingly, such shelter providers are exempt from having a Board-approved service restriction policy for their bedded program.

Shelter providers will make clients aware of the service restriction policy upon admission or as soon as possible, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after their admission. The service restriction policy will be posted in conspicuous areas of the shelter.

Shelter providers may only issue service restrictions from a bedded program as a last resort to address

- (a) Incidents involving violence, threats of violence (including threatening behaviour)
- (b) Serious occurrences arising from behaviours that cause dangerous circumstances for others
- (c) The violation of significant shelter rules
- (d) A client's continued refusal to work with staff on their service plan.

All service restrictions from a bedded program must be approved by a shelter's Executive Director or designate prior to being issued.

During Extreme Weather Alerts, shelter providers will temporarily suspend all service restrictions, except in cases where a shelter provider determines that the service-restricted client poses an immediate threat or danger to another individual's health or safety, or the security of the shelter.

Shelter providers will document the following information about service restrictions from a bedded program in SMIS in real time

- (a) The reason for the service restriction
- (b) The date that the service restriction will be reviewed with the client
- (c) The date the service restriction will be lifted
- (d) The name of the staff person who issued the service restriction.

Shelter providers will, at a minimum, provide clients with the following information, both verbally and in writing, upon the issuance of a service restriction or as soon as possible thereafter

- (a) The reason for the service restriction
- (b) The date that the service restriction will be reviewed with the client
- (c) The date the service restriction will be lifted



(d) Information about the client's right to initiate an appeal of their service restriction.

Shelter providers will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client has understood the information described under section 9.4.2 Service Restrictions above.

Shelter providers will advise clients wishing to appeal a service restriction of the shelter's internal processes for handling such appeals. If the client has exhausted the shelter's internal processes and is not satisfied with the outcome, shelter providers will direct the client to contact SSHA in order to make their complaint, as described under section 8 Complaints and Appeals.

Shelter providers will refer the service restricted client to another shelter in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

For clients who refuse a referral to another shelter, shelter providers will offer transportation assistance to reach a destination of the client's choice located within the City of Toronto, taking into account any client limitations (e.g., mobility, visual impairment) and safety considerations.

Shelter providers will not prohibit client access to other support services provided at the shelter site because of a service restriction from a bedded program unless the service restriction is agency-wide due to the severity of the client's actions/behaviour.

Shelter providers will limit the use of service restrictions lasting three (3) months or longer to only the most serious occurrences resulting from client's actions/behaviour.

Service restrictions lasting three (3) months or longer may only be issued with the approval of SSHA.

## **9.5 Extreme Weather**

The Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health is responsible for issuing Extreme Weather Alerts (i.e., cold alerts and heat alerts) and smog alerts.

SSHA may require shelter providers to provide extreme weather responses outlined below any time that weather conditions create a risk for clients, regardless of whether a Weather Alert, an Extreme Weather Alert or smog alert is declared.

During a Weather Alert, an Extreme Weather Alert, smog alert or when directed by SSHA, shelter providers will, at a minimum

- (a) Divert resources as needed to ensure continued delivery of core support services (i.e., bedded program, meal program)
- (b) Ensure at least one (1) air conditioned cooling area is available to clients during a heat-based Weather Alert or smog alert

- (c) Temporarily suspend all service restrictions, except in cases where a shelter provider determines that the service-restricted client poses an immediate threat or danger to another individual's health or safety, or the security of the shelter
- (d) Refer service-restricted clients to another shelter in compliance with section 9.2 Referrals
- (e) Relax admission eligibility requirements
- (f) Provide or extend daytime access to clients who are part of the client group served by the shelter
- (g) Based on a client's need, assist clients to obtain basic clothing and footwear appropriate for the season by using internal resources and/or connecting clients with community agencies.

Shelter providers that have been pre-approved by SSHA may exceed their funded bed capacity during Weather Alerts, as per their Operating Agreement.

Shelter providers will not exceed their maximum building occupancy as set out by Regulation 213/07: Fire Code (made under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1990) under any circumstances.

Shelter providers may temporarily use alternative sleeping arrangements that may not meet the requirements found under section 10.5.2 Beds, if all beds are occupied.

Shelter providers will transfer the client who is assigned to alternative sleeping arrangements to an unoccupied bed in their shelter at the earliest opportunity, or refer the client to another shelter as soon as possible in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

## **10 Programs, Supports and Services**

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### **10.1 Case Management and Service Planning**

Shelter providers will foster a safe and non-judgmental environment, free from harassment, abuse, discrimination and violence, within which to best provide housing, case management and other support services.

All shelter providers will offer some degree of case management and service planning to their clients.

Where possible, family shelter providers will assign child/children their own client support staff person who can focus on the specific service needs of the child/children.

As part of the case management and service planning, shelter staff will

- (a) Provide clients with preliminary information about case management (e.g., service plan expectations, available resources from the client support staff, support services available onsite) upon admission or no later than twenty-four (24) hours after their admission
- (b) Work with clients to determine their immediate needs/concerns (e.g., health, harm reduction needs, safety considerations) upon admission or as soon as possible thereafter and no later than thirty-six (36) hours after their admission
- (c) Work with clients to document a service plan by conducting an initial assessment of the client's needs, strengths, challenges and preferences as soon as possible and no later than seven (7) days after their admission.

An initial assessment of a client may include, but is not limited to identifying

- (a) Reason(s) for service
- (b) Family/household members who are not present in shelter
- (c) Specialized supports for LGBTQ2S, seniors and youth clients
- (d) Cultural/communication considerations
- (e) Ability and mobility issues
- (f) Need for personal identification documents
- (g) Need for health and mental health supports
- (h) Need for substance use and harm reduction supports
- (i) Need for financial supports as they relate to the client's housing plan

- (j) History of housing and homelessness
- (k) Employment history and employability needs
- (l) Educational goals and supports
- (m) Legal issues affecting the client
- (n) Need for daily living/life skills supports
- (o) Service/supports currently provided by other organizations
- (p) Client identified concerns.

Shelter providers may request and collect immigration status information to assist clients to obtain or replace identification, or determine eligibility for social assistance programs (e.g., Housing Help, housing subsidy programs, OW/ODSP, OAS, CPP) or services (e.g., health care) that require this information.

Shelter staff will work with each of their clients to develop and implement a service plan that is collaborative, respectful, client-centered, approached from an anti-oppression and trauma-informed care perspective, and guided by the principles of harm reduction.

Consistent with a Housing First approach, a client's service plan must, at a minimum, include a housing plan and a financial plan.

The Housing First approach may be modified for youth clients who may be going through significant developmental changes (e.g., physical, cognitive, emotional, social) and/or lack the life skills that adult clients may have. This may include modifying accommodation types, prioritizing family reconnections/reunification, and prioritizing supports for youth development within the client's service plan/housing plan.

Depending on a client's needs, the overall service plan may include other sub-plans. Examples of sub-plans include, but are not limited to, an employment plan, an education plan, a family reunification plan, an immigration plan, a substance treatment plan and an elderly client support plan.

Shelter staff will offer to provide a written copy of the service plan to the client, in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 12.6.4 Sharing/Disclosure of Client Information.

Shelter staff will regularly meet with a client to review and update their service plan as needed for the duration of the client's shelter stay. At a minimum, shelter staff will meet with youth clients once weekly, even if informally.

When reviewing a service plan with a client, shelter staff are encouraged to

- (a) Identify goals and priorities through client collaboration
- (b) Break down goals into manageable steps (immediate, medium- and long-term)
- (c) Identify who needs to be involved (case conferencing, referrals, advocacy)
- (d) Identify the person responsible for each action/activity
- (e) Implement steps in collaboration with stakeholders toward stated goals
- (f) Identify challenges and recognize achievements
- (g) Problem solve and guide the client in their own problem solving, including skills development
- (h) Review progress to date and update the service plan at the start of each meeting and at the point of service transition.

Upon a client's planned discharge, shelter staff will

- (a) Provide information in writing and assistance to the client regarding resources relevant to the next stage of their service plan, including community services and key personal supports
- (b) Review consent forms and summarize information for the client or next service provider to assist in ensuring continuity of service in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 12.6.4 Sharing/Disclosure of Client Information
- (c) For up to twelve (12) months following discharge from the shelter, and at the request of the client, provide follow-up services or referrals to help support the client's transition to housing, provide crisis support or provide eviction prevention activities.

Service plan components and the prescribed timelines set out under section 10.1 Case Management and Service Planning may be modified in consultation with SSHA.

Shelter staff will document all meetings with clients in a clear and consistent manner and include such service plan notes in a client's service plan file. All service plan notes will, at a minimum, include the following information

- (a) The date of the meeting
- (b) The date of the case note(s)
- (c) The location of the meeting

- (d) The name and role of the person making the note(s)
- (e) Contact information for all third parties named in the note(s)
- (f) Scan/copy of all relevant supporting documentation.

Shelter staff will update service plan notes at a minimum of once per week, even if there is no contact with a client. Such documentation will also include all appointments missed by a client including those with physicians, other support services workers, etc.

Shelter staff will summarize service plan notes every two (2) months and upon significant events (e.g., prior to a client transferring to another service provider, prior to a client's discharge from shelter, upon the resumption of shelter support services after a substantial hiatus, etc.)

Appropriate management staff (i.e., supervisor) or designates will review and sign-off on service plan summary notes.

Service plan summaries will describe, at a minimum, key information and the status of the current service plan, including but not limited to

- (a) Goals identified in the service plan
- (b) Actions/activities that the client has completed
- (c) Outstanding goals or actions.

## **10.2 Sector Specific Requirements**

### **10.2.1 Family Shelters**

Family shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for child safety, which will include, at a minimum, a section on field trips and lost child procedures, reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect and the maximum number of children that a shelter client is permitted to babysit at any one time
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

Family shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to keep a family unit or household intact.

As much as possible, family shelter providers will assign one family unit/household per room.

Family shelter providers are exempt from meeting the lateral separation requirements of 10.5.3 Space Standards in rooms where only one family unit/household has been assigned.

Family shelter providers will inform parents/guardians that

- (a) Parents/guardians are responsible for their children and their children's behavior at all times during their stay in shelter
- (b) Children must be registered in school during their stay at the shelter.

Family shelter providers will support and encourage parents/guardians to

- (a) Be involved and participate in children's programs with their child/children
- (b) Use non-violent ways of disciplining children under their care
- (c) Be attentive to child safety practices including, but not limited to covering electrical outlets and sharp protruding edges or corners in their room, storing harmful chemicals or cleaning supplies in a secure area, taking measures to prevent children from climbing around/through windows and taking measures to protect children from accidental burns.

Family shelter providers will

- (a) Stock a supply of disposable infant/toddler diapers for emergency use
- (b) Encourage the use of disposable diapers
- (c) Permit the use of cloth diapers only where adequate laundry facilities and hygiene control procedures exist
- (d) Ensure that any diaper change stations in public or communal areas are installed near a washbasin supplied with running hot and cold water, soap, and paper towels
- (e) Clean and disinfect diaper change stations regularly.

#### 10.2.2 Services to Children

Where possible, family shelter providers will assign child/children their own client support staff person who can focus on the specific service needs of the child/children.

Family shelter providers will offer a variety of developmentally appropriate activities for children within the shelter and/or ensure such opportunities are available within the surrounding community.

Family shelter providers will offer opportunities for children with developmental and/or physical disabilities to develop their full potential within an environment where they can interact and socialize with other children.

### 10.2.3 Children's Activity Materials

Family shelter providers will ensure that all shelter-owned toys and activity materials are

- (a) Safe, fully functional and large enough to prevent swallowing or choking
- (b) Not discriminatory or offensive in any way and do not encourage the use of violence
- (c) Fully washable.

Family shelter providers will ensure that shelter-owned toys and activity materials are cleaned and disinfected according to a regular schedule. At a minimum,

- (a) Infant toys will be washed per use and disinfected daily
- (b) Toddler and pre-school toys will be washed as needed and disinfected weekly
- (c) Toys for older children will be washed and disinfected as needed.

### 10.2.4 Children's Activities and Programs

Family shelter providers will provide program summary/activity plans to parents/guardians prior to the commencement of any program/activity or may post such summary/plans in conspicuous areas of the shelter.

Family shelter providers will obtain written parental/guardian consent prior to a child's participation in a program/activity.

Field trips organized for children must be safe, educational/recreational in nature and age/developmentally appropriate.

Family shelter staff who organize, supervise or chaperone field trips will, at a minimum, review their child safety policy and lost child procedure prior to commencing any field trip.

Shelter providers will ensure that there is at least one (1) staff with a valid Standard First Aid and CPR certification on any field trip or outing. For family shelter providers, the appropriate level of training must include Standard First Aid and CPR for children and infants.

Family shelter providers will ensure informational materials and displays in children's activity areas are not discriminatory or disrespectful.

Family shelter providers are encouraged to seek partnerships with support agencies to provide onsite program/activity supports or by providing information to parents/guardians about relevant community resources.



### 10.2.5 Duty to Report Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

Family shelter providers will

- (a) Report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect as required under section 72 of the Child and Family Services Act, 1990
- (b) Work in full cooperation with child welfare agencies.

## **10.3 Client Specific Requirements**

### 10.3.1 LGBTQ2S Clients

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy that details how services are provided to members of the LGBTQ2S community in a manner that preserves their safety and dignity
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised
- (c) Provide a copy of the policy and procedures or a plain language version of the policy and procedures (e.g., simplified orientation brochure) to clients upon their request.

Shelter providers will ask all clients about their gender identity rather than assume.

Shelter providers will accept gender identity and gender expression as defined by a client.

In all their interactions, staff will use a client's chosen name and pronoun.

Shelter providers will make their services accessible to transgender clients in their self-identified gender.

Shelter providers will support the choices of transgender clients to gain access to sleeping areas in the gender that the client identifies with that will best preserve their safety and dignity.

In instances where transgender clients express concerns about the preservation of their safety or dignity, shelter providers will accommodate the client's request for a bed in a gender-neutral/private room, if possible, or in a male or female sleeping area regardless of their gender identity.

Emergency shelter providers will continue to provide toiletries and hygiene supplies as described under 10.6.2 Toiletries and Hygiene, based on the client's need for the duration of the client's shelter stay.

Shelter providers may discontinue providing toiletry and hygiene products if part of a client's service plan requires it or if clients with an income source are able to purchase these supplies.

Transgender clients may have a need for toiletries and hygiene supplies that is greater than other clients. Shelter providers will work with transgender clients to provide additional supplies.

Shelter providers will provide a minimum of one (1) washroom that is barrier-free, fully accessible and designated gender neutral in each shelter.

Shelter providers will inform transgender clients of the availability and location of gender neutral washrooms.

Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to ensure that transgender clients have privacy while showering.

Shelter providers will ensure that communal showers have shower curtains or equivalent privacy feature(s), or provide transgender clients with sole access to communal shower facilities at alternate times.

Shelter providers will treat hormones that belong to transgender clients as any other medication and will not consider them a prohibited substance nor confiscate them.

Shelter providers are encouraged to seek partnerships with LGBTQ2S-positive health/services providers.

Shelter providers that are not able to provide health or support services to LGBTQ2S clients will provide appropriate referrals to LGBTQ2S-positive health/services providers.

## **10.4 Specialized Programs Requirements**

### **10.4.1 Financial/Savings Programs**

Shelter providers will encourage and work with clients to establish financial savings in order to help offset the initial costs of living they may face when they transition to housing as well as to support their independence by building their capacity to manage their financial affairs.

Shelter providers will offer clients or refer clients to supports that will increase their capacity to manage their finances including, but not limited to, credit counseling and household budgeting.

Shelter providers will encourage and work with clients to open a bank account if the client does not already have an active account.

Shelter providers will encourage and work with clients to participate in a voluntary trusteeship or use the services of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, where such services would be appropriate or benefit the client.

Shelter providers that offer an in-house savings program as part of their case management will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding client savings including, but not limited to, the collection, safe keeping, recording and

disbursement of client funds, the handling of abandoned client funds, and who is authorized by the shelter provider to access client funds

- (b) Ensure that clients have access to their savings whenever they request, regardless of any savings goals
- (c) Determine savings goals with the client
- (d) Work with clients to gradually move their savings to a bank account under their own management or a trusteeship program.

### **10.5 Facilities and Space Standards**

Shelter providers will comply with requirements of section 11.3 Facilities Management that relate to the design of a building or space.

Shelter providers will ensure that designated sleeping areas are physically separated from dining areas and other communal areas unless alternative sleeping arrangements are approved for limited use by SSHA (e.g., during an Extreme Weather Alert).

Shelter providers will ensure at least one (1) air conditioned cooling area is available to clients during a heat-based Extreme Weather Alert or smog alert.

Shelter providers will create or enhance the privacy of a client's sleeping area including, but not limited to, using screens, half walls, rearranging furniture or layout of sleeping area in order to create a more private space.

Shelter providers will provide lockers or other secure forms of storage for clients to store their belongings (e.g., locked storage room, safekeeping program).

Shelter providers will install and maintain appropriate window coverings to ensure client comfort and privacy.

Shelter providers will ensure that all textiles used as interior treatments for rooms and furniture (e.g., window coverings, upholstered furniture, carpet/rugs) are pest resistant and fire/moisture retardant.

Shelter providers will provide laundering facilities onsite or have a contract in place with a laundering service for bedding and linens.

If laundry facilities are available onsite, clients may launder their own clothes, bedding and towels as long as instructions about the safe use of the laundry facilities are provided.

Shelter providers will offer laundry soap or may require clients with an income source to purchase these supplies.

Shelter providers will ensure sharps containers are available on shelter premises, secured against tampering (e.g., placing a cage around the container that allows for sharps to enter the container), and inform clients of the availability of sharps containers and how to use them.

#### 10.5.1 Washrooms

To assist clients with their hygiene needs, shelter providers will provide

- (a) A minimum of one (1) washroom that is barrier-free, fully accessible and designated gender neutral in each shelter
- (b) A minimum of one (1) toilet for every fifteen (15) clients up to the first one-hundred (100) clients, and one (1) toilet for every thirty (30) clients thereafter. Urinals may replace up to half the number of required toilets in men's washrooms
- (c) A minimum of one (1) washbasin for every fifteen (15) clients
- (d) A minimum of one (1) soap dispenser within 2 ft (0.6 m) of each washbasin
- (e) A minimum of one (1) shower for every twenty (20) clients.

Shelter providers will ensure that communal showers have shower curtains or equivalent privacy feature(s).

Shelter providers must stock each washroom with an adequate supply of toilet paper, liquid soap for dispensers, paper towels and/or a hands-free hand dryer unless clients are responsible for purchasing their own supplies (e.g., family shelter programs).

#### 10.5.2 Beds

As much as possible, cribs, cradles, bassinets and beds will be arranged in a manner that

- (a) Reduces the spread of communicable diseases
- (b) Facilitates clear walking paths and sightlines for emergency evacuations
- (c) Does not block air vents, windows, doors, plumbing or access panels
- (d) Does not expose a client to existing or potential dangers (e.g., under a shelf stocked with heavy items, etc.).

Each bed for use by clients older than two (2) years of age will have a mattress that corresponds with the size of the bed frame (e.g., a twin mattress on a twin-sized frame). The minimum mattress size is 30 in x 72 in x 3.5 in (0.76 m x 1.82 m x 0.89 m).

Exceptions to the minimum mattress size are permitted under exceptional circumstances including Extreme Weather Alerts, with prior approval from SSHA.

Cribs, cradles or bassinets, and their corresponding mattresses, for clients younger than two (2) years of age, will conform to the specifications prescribed under the Cribs, Cradles and Bassinets Regulations SOR/2010-261.

Shelter providers will ensure that all mattresses are pest resistant and fire/moisture retardant or covered by a material designed to achieve the same qualities.

Shelter providers will have a mattress replacement plan which will, at a minimum, include an inspection schedule for bed bugs and common defects (e.g., stains, rips and tears).

Shelter providers will consult with SSHA prior to purchasing new or replacing existing bed frames.

### 10.5.3 Personal Space Requirements

Shelter providers will provide a minimum of 37.7 ft<sup>2</sup> (3.5 m<sup>2</sup>) of space per client in sleeping areas to decrease the transmission of communicable diseases and conflict between clients (see Appendix A: Space Standards Examples). Shelter providers are encouraged to exceed this standard by providing more space between beds and discouraging the use of large dorms where possible.

Shelter providers will prepare floor plans that illustrate the spacing of the beds in designated sleeping areas.

Shelter providers will maintain a lateral separation of at least 2.5 ft (0.75 m) between beds (or alternative sleeping arrangements) and a vertical separation of at least 3.5 ft (1.1 m) between the top of a bed frame to the lowest hanging section of an overhead object (e.g., upper bunk frame, light fixture, bulkhead, air duct, plumbing, etc.) (see Appendix A: Space Standards Examples).

Family shelter providers are exempt from meeting the lateral separation requirements of 10.5.3 Space Standards in rooms where only one family unit/household has been assigned.

Shelter providers will seek SSHA approval prior to arranging beds (or alternative sleeping arrangements) in a manner other than described under section 10.5.3 Space Standards.

## 10.6 Personal Needs

### 10.6.1 Bedding

Upon admission, shelter providers will offer each client clean bedding consisting of a minimum of two (2) sheets, one (1) blanket, one (1) pillow, one (1) pillow case and one (1) shower towel that is at least 18 in x 30 in (0.45 m X 0.75 m) in size. Additional bedding will be provided if necessary. Clients who use cribs must be provided with clean crib sheets.

Shelter providers will establish a schedule for regular laundering and changing of bedding, crib sheets and towels that accounts for regular use, soiling and contamination.

If laundry facilities are available onsite, clients may launder their own clothes, bedding and towels as long as instructions about the safe use of the laundry facilities are provided.

If clients are not able or willing to launder their bedding and towels then shelter providers will launder the bedding and towels on a client's behalf.

Shelter providers will offer laundry soap or may require clients with an income source to purchase these supplies.

### 10.6.2 Toiletries and Hygiene

Shelter providers will assist clients to obtain items needed to maintain basic hygiene and grooming. At a minimum, emergency shelter providers will offer each client soap, shampoo, a toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving products (e.g., razors), hygiene pads/tampons and incontinence products as appropriate upon admission or no later than twelve (12) hours after their admission.

Emergency shelter providers will continue to provide toiletries and hygiene supplies as described under section 10.6.2 Toiletries and Hygiene, based on the client's need for the duration of the client's shelter stay.

Shelter providers may discontinue providing toiletry and hygiene products if part of a client's service plan requires it or if clients with an income source are able to purchase these supplies.

Transgender clients may have a need for toiletries and hygiene supplies that is greater than other clients. Shelter providers will work with transgender clients to provide additional supplies.

Shelter providers will provide toiletries and hygiene products that are low fragrance or fragrance-free and hypoallergenic, where possible.

### 10.6.3 Clothing and Sundry Items

Based on a client's need, shelter providers will help clients obtain basic clothing and footwear appropriate for the season by using internal resources and/or connecting clients with community agencies.

Clients may be offered public transit fare with the amount and frequency determined by their service plan.

Clients with an income source may be required to contribute toward the cost of their transportation needs.

Where there is no service plan, clients with or without an income source may be offered public transit fare based on their immediate needs and the shelter's policies.

## **10.7 Health and Mental Health Services**

Shelter providers will support clients who seek to address their health and mental health care needs. At a minimum, shelter providers will

- (a) Assist clients with finding appropriate support services and make referrals when a shelter cannot provide the requested health and mental health services
- (b) Issue a Leave with Permission for clients who seek non-emergency health and mental health care services at another institution in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.3.4 Leave with Permission
- (c) Make every effort to accommodate ill clients at their shelter by providing daytime access as described under section 9.3.6 Daytime Access
- (d) Provide additional food servings and/or dietary supplements to clients who have been medically diagnosed as undernourished or underweight or refer clients to another shelter or service that provides the relevant dietary supports in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 10.8.2 Dietary Restrictions and Accommodation and section 9.2 Referrals.

#### 10.7.1 Harm Reduction

Upon the request of a client, shelter providers will

- (a) Provide safer injection equipment, safer crack smoking equipment and/or safer sex products
- (b) Refer clients to Toronto Public Health's The Works program, an organization listed by Toronto Public Health (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources) or another organization that offers harm reduction supplies and related support services.

Shelter providers will ensure sharps containers are available on shelter premises, secured against tampering (e.g., placing a cage around the container that allows for sharps to enter the container) and inform clients of the availability of sharps containers and how to use them.

Upon the request of a client, shelter providers will refer clients to Toronto Public Health's The Works program for

- (a) Free testing for HIV (anonymous and Rapid testing available), Hepatitis B and C and Syphilis
- (b) Free vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B, Tetanus, Pneumococcal pneumonia and Influenza
- (c) Naloxone distribution and training
- (d) Wound care.

Shelter providers will refer clients who are seeking methadone/suboxone treatment to Toronto Public Health's Methadone Works program or a similar program.

Shelter providers will neither prohibit nor confiscate the following items from clients

- (a) Life-saving medications (e.g., Epi-pens, nitroglycerin tablets, asthma inhalers, naloxone, etc.) or medications that have been prescribed
- (b) Hormones that belong to transgender clients
- (c) Safer injection equipment, safer crack smoking equipment and/or safer sex products, as described under section 10.7.1 (Harm Reduction).

Shelter providers will support clients who wish to engage in harm reduction programs by offering public transit fare to attend such programs or related appointments.

#### 10.7.2 Abstinence

Shelters providers operating with an abstinence-based model will

- (a) Identify how abstinence is defined within their program
- (b) Define to what extent they are able to provide service to non-abstaining clients
- (c) Document and submit a detailed description of the service model to SSHA for review and approval.

Shelter providers that prohibit the use of alcohol onsite must inform clients prior to admission.

Following the principles of harm reduction, admission decisions will not be based on a client's substance use.

Abstinence-based shelter providers will provide a private, dedicated space where clients under the influence of substances may rest until the effects of those substances have subsided.

Abstinence-based shelter providers may discharge and/or issue a service restriction to a client who breaks shelter rules or policies regarding substance use in a manner that complies with requirements under section 9.4 Discharge and section 9.4.2 Service Restrictions.

Abstinence-based shelter providers will refer the discharged and/or service-restricted client to another shelter or appropriate support services in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

#### 10.7.3 Client Medication

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding client medication (narcotic and non-narcotic) including, but not limited to, its management, issuance, administration, secure storage, disposal and who is authorized by the shelter provider to access client medications and provide medication-related assistance



- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

Shelter providers will encourage clients to self-administer medication whenever possible and will not require clients to surrender their medications.

Clients will be fully responsible for securely storing, accessing and administering their medication.

Some clients may require support from shelter staff (e.g., reminders, assistance with opening containers, etc.) or require shelter staff to administer their medication (e.g., where a physical limitation prevents the client from self-administering their medication). Only authorized staff may provide medication-related assistance to clients.

Shelter providers will treat medication information as confidential health information, as described under section 12.6 Confidentiality.

Shelter providers that assist clients with their medications will do so in a manner that meets the requirements of 10.7.4 Secure Storage of Medication and maintain a consistent method of documenting medication information containing, at a minimum

- (a) Name of client
- (b) Name of client's medication
- (c) Date and time medication is accessed, issued or administered to the client
- (d) Name of the staff who issued and/or administered the medication
- (e) Client signature confirming they received their medication.

Shelter providers are not responsible for ensuring that clients adhere to the prescribed instructions for taking their medications and will release stored medication to clients whenever they request it.

Shelter providers with concerns about the ability of a client to self-administer their medication or with misuse of their medication and/or the safety of the medication should

- (a) First discuss these concerns with the client
- (b) If still concerned, seek client consent to consult with the client's health care professional (e.g., nurse, psychiatrist, physician) or the pharmacist who dispensed the medication to the client.

#### 10.7.4 Secure Storage of Medication

Only authorized staff and/or the client will have access to the client's medication.

At a minimum, all medications will be

- (a) Inventoried and labeled appropriately
- (b) Stored in separate containers for each client
- (c) Kept in a safe and secure location (e.g., a cabinet in an office, or locker or locked drawer in a client's room) at all times other than the time that the medication is accessed or administered.

Shelter providers will provide secure refrigerator space in an access-restricted area dedicated to the sole storage of medications requiring refrigeration.

Shelter providers will not store medications in the same refrigerator that is used to store expressed breast milk or food, as described under section 10.8.2 Dietary Restrictions and Accommodation.

#### 10.7.5 Disposal of Medication

Shelter providers will

- (a) Specify how long unclaimed, unused and/or expired medication will be kept before it is properly disposed
- (b) Treat all unclaimed, unused and/or expired medications as hazardous waste and either drop off these medications at a pharmacy, a City of Toronto Household Hazardous Waste Depot, or arrange for third party collection and disposal.

#### 10.7.6 Medication Management Program

Shelter providers that offer a Medication Management Program will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures to ensure that all medications are possessed, issued, administered and disposed as required by law and in accordance with leading practices
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

### **10.8 Food, Diet and Nutrition**

In order to promote a healthy diet among clients, shelter providers will

- (a) Offer clients safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs

- (b) Refer clients, particularly pregnant, breast feeding and elderly clients, to food and nutrition supports (e.g., prenatal program, community kitchen, etc.) to supplement their diet, if necessary
- (c) Ensure meals and snacks are of a size, quality, variety and nutritional value to meet the recommended guidelines of Canada's Food Guide (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources)
- (d) Avoid serving food with poor nutritional value (e.g., foods high in processed sugar, fat and salt)
- (e) Not use food or the withholding of food to influence behaviour (either as reward or punishment)
- (f) Consult with a registered dietitian, on an annual basis or more frequently as needed, for support in menu planning, training and other food services, and other food security and nutrition-related supports
- (g) Post in a conspicuous place in or near the dining area of each shelter a copy of TSS section 10.8 Food, Diet and Nutrition, a current copy of Canada's Food Guide, a daily menu that will list potential allergens (e.g., peanuts, nuts, eggs and shellfish) in the listed menu items (where possible) and a notice stating that shelters cannot guarantee allergen-free food.

Shelter providers must offer meals to clients in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 10.8.1 Meal Program.

Shelter providers that are not able to offer meals onsite as part of a meal program will

- (a) Seek the approval of SSHA and provide clients with a food allowance to purchase food and ensure adequate facilities are available and accessible for clients to safely store and prepare their own meals
- (b) Have a Board-approved policy and management procedures for calculating food allowance amounts, eligibility criteria, an issuance process and reporting requirements
- (c) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

#### 10.8.1 Meal Program

Shelter providers that do not provide meals as part of their shelter service are exempt from all requirements of section 10.8.1 Meal Program.

Shelter providers will plan meal menus at least one (1) week in advance.

Adult and youth clients will be offered three (3) meals and a minimum of one (1) healthy snack per day. Children must be served three (3) meals and two (2) to three (3) healthy snacks per day.

Shelter providers must be able to provide food to a client outside of a shelter's regularly scheduled meal times.

Shelters providers will ensure that a mechanism is available that allows clients to provide input and feedback (e.g., residents' meetings and surveys) and to incorporate this feedback into menu planning whenever possible.

#### 10.8.2 Dietary Restrictions and Accommodation

Clients with food allergies, religious dietary restrictions, or medically prescribed diets will be accommodated where possible.

If it is not possible to accommodate these dietary needs, shelter providers will work with clients to develop a dietary plan that meets the client's needs including, but not limited to, applying for special diet allowances or referring clients to nutrition support programs.

A client who has been medically diagnosed as undernourished or underweight will be offered additional food servings and/or a high-protein or high-calorie dietary supplement over and above regular meals.

Shelter providers serving pregnant or breastfeeding clients will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy on handling and storing expressed breast milk and must provide adequate storage facilities (i.e., refrigerator) for the expressed milk
- (b) Not store expressed breast milk in the same refrigerator as client medications
- (c) Offer the client additional food at meal times and healthy snacks at all times in between, meal-time flexibility, menu alternatives and/or safe storage for purchased foods to help meet their dietary needs
- (d) Refer clients, particularly pregnant and breastfeeding clients, to food and nutrition supports (e.g., prenatal program, community kitchen, etc.) to supplement their diet, if necessary.

Shelter providers will ensure that baby formula and the proper preparation equipment and safe storage space is provided for clients with newborns or infants who are not breastfeeding.

Shelter providers that serve clients with infants must make infant appropriate foods available (e.g., iron fortified cereals and/or soft cooked, pureed, mashed foods).

Shelter providers that issue food allowances to families, as described under section 10.8 Food, Diet and Nutrition, will stock a supply of infant appropriate foods for emergency use.

Clients who do not eat meat will have access to protein-based vegetarian food options (e.g., beans or soy-based products) as snacks and at every meal. Vegetarian food options must meet the basic nutritional requirements of the Canada Food Guide (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources).

Food preparation will, as much as possible, reflect the cultural diversity of shelter clients. Every attempt will be made to mark special cultural holidays and traditional occasions with special meals.

### 10.8.3 Food Safety

Shelter providers will ensure that all foods are prepared, handled, stored and transported in a safe and sanitary manner to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and prevent the spread of food-borne illness in compliance with Toronto Public Health food preparation requirements.

Shelter providers will ensure that shelter staff who handle or prepare food and all supervisors of staff who handle or prepare food must have a valid Food Handlers' certificate.

Shelter providers will ensure that clients and/or volunteers involved in food preparation are supervised by a certified food handler.

Shelter providers that prepare food onsite will be subject to regular inspections by Toronto Public Health.

Shelter providers will ensure donated foods are safe, of good quality and come from an inspected source.

Food must be received in containers with tight-fitting lids or other suitable methods to protect it from contamination or adulteration.

## **11 Health and Safety**

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At least one (1) staff who holds a valid certification in Standard First Aid and CPR must be on duty at all times in the shelter. For staff in family shelters, the appropriate level of training must include Standard First Aid and CPR for children and infants.

Shelter providers will ensure that an approved first aid kit is available in the shelter and a portable kit is taken on outings, in a manner that complies with the requirements found in Regulation 1101: First Aid Requirements.

Shelter providers will ensure that there is at least one (1) staff with a valid Standard First Aid and CPR certification on any field trip or outing. For family shelter providers, the appropriate level of training must include Standard First Aid and CPR for children and infants.

Family shelter staff who organize, supervise or chaperone field trips will review their child safety policy and lost child procedure prior to commencing any field trip.

### **11.1 Health Standards**

Shelter providers will have Board-approved infection control policies and procedures to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases. Written policies and procedures for the prevention, screening and reporting of communicable disease cases and outbreaks will be developed in consultation with Toronto Public Health.

Shelter providers will provide personal protective equipment (e.g., respirator, goggles, disposable gloves, etc.), supplies and the necessary training to staff in order to effectively implement all communicable disease control policies and procedures.

Shelter providers will promote frequent hand-washing among staff and clients to reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

Shelter providers will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol to supplement hand-washing in high contact areas (e.g., reception and dining areas) and in the event that water is not available (e.g., loss of water due to plumbing issue) and take appropriate measures to control or prevent misuse or misapplication of the product.

If a client appears ill or has an illness that presents a health risk to other clients, shelter providers will encourage the client to seek medical treatment and where possible facilitate referrals to community medical resources in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 9.2 Referrals.

Shelter providers will recommend that all shelter staff consult a health care professional about updating their vaccinations, including annual Influenza vaccination, and completing a TB skin test.

Shelter providers will provide staff with training and information about the following, but not limited to

- (a) Preventing transmission of communicable diseases within the shelter through use of routine practices and additional precautions (formerly known as universal health precautions) such as hand-washing, personal hygiene practices, housekeeping practices, food safety and use of personal protective equipment
- (b) Specific diseases such as TB, HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and common childhood diseases for family shelters only
- (c) The shelter's response plan for individual cases or outbreaks of communicable disease
- (d) Procedures for dealing with occupational exposure to blood or bodily fluids, biohazardous waste management, needle pricks and the safe handling of all sharps.

Shelter providers will regularly monitor Toronto Public Health updates and provide educational updates or training to staff on the above topics.

## **11.2 Safety Standards**

Staff must be on shift at any and all times during a shelter's hours of operation. When on shift, all staff must be alert and attentive to the activities within the shelter. Sleeping while on shift is prohibited.

Shelter providers will be responsible for scheduling shifts in a manner that complies with the requirements of the Employment Standards Act, 2000.

Shelter providers will ensure that all individuals are safe and secure within the facility. Entrances to the shelter must be secured against unwanted entry. Emergency exits must be equipped with an alarm to alert staff of unauthorized entry and exits.

Shelter staff will conduct regularly scheduled and frequent rounds during all hours of a shelter's operations. Rounds include but are not limited to bed checks, bathroom checks and checks for secured and unobstructed entry/exits.

Shelter providers will have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding hazardous materials and the reporting of unsafe conditions by any individual within the shelter that, at a minimum, includes labelling, storage, disposal and staff training requirements in safe handling and the use of personal protective equipment.

Shelter providers will have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures in place for the safe collection, removal and disposal of solid waste, recyclable materials, organic waste, biohazardous and hazardous materials.

Shelter providers will have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for inspecting a client's bed, room and/or personal belongings if such an inspection is considered

necessary in order to maintain the safety and security of staff, clients and the good condition of shelter property.

Shelter providers will install and maintain at least one (1) eye wash station according to the manufacturer's instructions. The eyewash station must be in an area of the shelter that is easily accessible by anyone in the shelter and its location identified with a highly visible sign.

#### 11.2.1 Weapons and Prohibited Items

Shelter providers must have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding weapons and other items deemed potentially dangerous or prohibited by the shelter provider that, at a minimum includes their confiscation, safe handling and disposal when such items are brought inside the shelter or anywhere on shelter property.

Staff may ask clients about any and all items that a client intends to bring into the shelter. Staff may refuse to admit a client if staff have reasonable grounds to believe that the client is in possession of a weapon or other prohibited items and the client refuses to disclose the items in question.

Shelter providers should seek guidance from the Toronto Police Service when confiscating, securing and disposing of weapons or other prohibited items.

Shelter providers will neither prohibit nor confiscate the following items from clients

- (a) Life-saving medications (e.g., Epi-pens, nitroglycerin tablets, asthma inhalers, naloxone, etc.) or medications that have been prescribed
- (b) Hormones that belong to transgender clients
- (c) Safer injection equipment, safer crack smoking equipment and/or safer sex products, as described under section 10.7.1 Harm Reduction.

Shelter providers that prohibit the use of alcohol onsite must inform clients prior to admission.

### 11.3 Facilities Management

Shelter providers will comply with all applicable legislation and codes regarding property standards, building and elevator maintenance, building and elevator operations, ventilation, heating/cooling, plumbing, fire/life safety systems and accessibility.

When planning significant renovations to their facility, or undertaking work that requires a building permit, shelter providers will notify SSHA, comply with all applicable building codes, fire codes, bylaws and review relevant design considerations found in

- (a) Environmental Control Best Practices: Guidelines to Reduce TB Transmission in Homeless Shelters and Drop-In Centres



(b) Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards

(c) Section 10.5 Facilities and Space Standards.

#### 11.3.1 Custodial Services

Shelter providers will have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures for emergency custodial service response. Regular custodial services will be available seven (7) days per week.

Shelter providers will have a documented cleaning plan that will include, at a minimum, a cleaning schedule (frequency of cleaning/disinfecting) and some form of documentation noting when cleaning/disinfecting was completed for all areas/items identified in the cleaning plan.

Shelter providers will maintain adequate inventories of cleaning supplies and ensure all supplies are appropriately labeled and stored in a safe and secure location at all times when not in use by an authorized staff. Hazardous materials and related items must be inaccessible to clients at all times.

Shelter providers will collect waste safely and at frequent intervals to prevent noxious odours or unsanitary conditions.

Shelter providers will store waste in impervious containers with tight-fitting lids. Containers must be fitted with appropriate liners and cleaned regularly.

Shelter providers will store waste and waste containers in a secure location prior to being disposed, collected or transported.

Shelter providers will store and transport clean and soiled linens in a manner that limits cross-contamination. Soiled linens should be handled with minimum agitation to avoid spreading contaminants.

Shelter providers must provide sharps containers and dispose of sharps properly.

#### 11.3.2 Maintenance

Shelter providers will have a documented preventive maintenance plan that specifies the manner and frequency with which inspections, preventive maintenance, emergency repairs, routine upkeep and long-term replacements of building components, systems and equipment are conducted, in order to maintain the building in a state of good repair.

Shelter providers will maintain complete and accurate inspection, service and maintenance records for building operations.

Shelter providers will have in-house or contracted building maintenance services available seven (7) days per week.

Shelter providers will ensure that contractors and sub-contractors abide by their Staff Code of Conduct.

Shelter providers will have a pest control policy, have procedures that specifically address bed bugs and have an integrated pest control program to keep shelters free of rodents and pests that, at a minimum, includes

- (a) Regularly scheduled inspections and treatment conducted by a licensed pest control company
- (b) Documentation of all pest sightings and/or evidence of infestations
- (c) A communication plan to inform clients and staff of treatment plans that, at a minimum, includes a treatment schedule and the precautions required.

Shelter providers will participate in bed bug and other pest-related surveys conducted by SSHA.

#### **11.4 Property Management and Capital Planning**

Shelter providers that own their building will have

- (a) A Building Condition Audit (BCA) and a Capital Reserve Fund Forecast (CRFF) completed every ten (10) years and updated every three (3) to five (5) years by a qualified professional
- (b) A Board-approved Capital Plan that is informed by the BCA/CRFF and a preventive maintenance plan.

Shelter providers are encouraged to have a professional energy audit conducted at least once every ten (10) years and to prepare and implement an energy management plan based on the audit findings.

#### **11.5 Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity**

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved business continuity plan, emergency plan, and evacuation plan for each shelter site
- (b) Review and update such plans every two (2) years or more frequently if required (e.g., as a result of significant renovation, significant staffing changes, etc.)
- (c) Submit a copy of these plans to SSHA, and resubmit a copy when the plans are updated or otherwise revised
- (d) Ensure staff are trained on the various components of these plans, at least once a year.

Business continuity plans will, at a minimum

- (a) Identify resource requirements to continue to provide essential services (e.g., food, water, shelter), onsite or offsite, during emergency situations and non-emergency service disruptions (e.g., influenza pandemic, temporary power outage, labour disruption)
- (b) Include procedures for determining, managing and reporting service disruptions, which will include, but not be limited to, the requirements described under section 12.5.3 Service Disruption and arranging to refer/transfer clients to another shelter or other temporary location during a service disruption, if the need arises
- (c) Include contact information for shelter management staff and SSHA staff
- (d) Be explained to all staff as part of their orientation to the shelter.

Emergency plans will, at a minimum

- (a) Provide direction for the shelter's response to ensure the safety and security of staff and clients in a wide range of emergency situations
- (b) Be appropriate for each facility and client group that a shelter serves
- (c) Adequately consider potential emergencies that might arise because of natural events (e.g., weather-related emergency), human-caused events (e.g., bomb threats), accidental hazards (e.g., fire, chemical leak) and technological and infrastructure disruptions (e.g., power failure, gas leak, heat loss)
- (d) Assume that assistance from the City may not be available for the first seventy-two (72) hours after a large-scale emergency
- (e) Include lock down procedures
- (f) Include a Toronto Fire Services approved fire safety plan, required under Regulation 213/07: Fire Code (made under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1990)
- (g) Include procedures on how to shut down/start up building systems (e.g., HVAC, water, gas) in a safe manner
- (h) Include contact information for shelter management staff and SSHA staff
- (i) Be explained to all staff and clients as part of their orientation to the shelter.

Evacuation plans will be appropriate for each facility and client group a shelter serves and include procedures for the total evacuation of the building.

Evacuation plans will include, at a minimum

- (a) Procedures for evacuation of clients with mobility issues or other disabilities
- (b) Procedures for evacuation of service animals, emotional support animals and pets
- (c) Procedures for evacuations that take place during peak hours (i.e., when staffing levels are highest) and during off-peak hours (i.e., when staffing levels are minimal)
- (d) Procedures on how to shut down/start up building systems (e.g., HVAC, water, gas) in a safe manner
- (e) An evacuation map that is posted in conspicuous areas throughout the shelter
- (f) Identification of two (2) designated evacuation sites, one of which must be in a location that is not in the same neighbourhood as the shelter
- (g) Evacuation plans will be explained to all staff and clients as part of their orientation to the shelter.

## **12 Administration**

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Shelter providers and their Board of Directors will comply with all of the terms and conditions of their Operating Agreements, the TSS and Hostel Services Directives.

### **12.1 Board Requirements**

Not-for-profit organizations funded to provide shelter services must be governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

At a minimum, the Board of Directors is responsible for

- (a) Developing and reviewing the mandate, mission, values and strategies of the organization
- (b) Setting agency priorities
- (c) Reviewing and approving policies
- (d) Evaluating service models and delivery
- (e) Entering into a purchase-of-service contract (i.e., Operating Agreement) with the City
- (f) Ensuring that the organization meets funder expectations, contract conditions and reporting requirements
- (g) Reviewing budgets and expenditures
- (h) Reviewing and approving accounting and reporting procedures
- (i) Conducting an annual performance review of the Executive Director
- (j) Ensuring that the organization meets all legislative obligations.

Boards of Directors will have the required number of directors as specified in the agency's bylaws. Further, the Board will solicit diverse membership to reflect the community they serve and with the range of skills required to fulfill this role.

The Board of Directors must convene regular meetings, conduct an annual general meeting and maintain written records of these meetings. Board minutes and minutes from the annual general meeting must be signed by the Chair or designate to verify acceptance.

### **12.2 Organizational Requirements**

#### **12.2.1 Financial Accountability**

On an annual basis, shelter providers will provide program and financial information to SSHA in a format specified by SSHA. Annual budget submissions will be submitted, in the specified format, by a date determined by SSHA. Operating Agreements between shelter providers and

SSHA shall have a term not longer than one (1) calendar year. Operating Agreements will be duly signed by a member of the Board of Directors.

Purchase-of-service shelter providers will submit a completed SMIS Per Diem Submission Claim form (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates) to SSHA each month in order to be reimbursed for the services provided during the billing period.

A shelter's occupancy must not exceed its funded capacity as specified in its Operating Agreement unless approved by SSHA. Shelter providers will only be reimbursed up to the maximum value as specified in the Operating Agreement.

The completed SMIS Per Diem Submission Claim form will be reviewed and signed by a person with delegated authority. A SMIS Per Diem Submission Claim form without an authorized signature will not be processed. To register an employee as a signing officer, a Delegation of Signing Authority form (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates) must be completed and submitted to SSHA. Electronic signatures are acceptable on the SMIS Per Diem Submission Claim form.

Shelter providers will ensure that their financial recordkeeping practices adhere to generally accepted accounting principles. All financial records will be kept for a minimum of seven (7) years and made available for auditing.

Shelter providers will have an annual audit conducted by a qualified, independent auditor. Multi-service organizations and shelter providers that provide more than one (1) shelter service/program will provide an audited statement of shelter operations for each site. Such organizations are required to use the Audited Statement of Shelter Operations template (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates).

#### 12.2.2 Program Accountability

SSHA will conduct reviews and audits as described under section 2.4 Quality Assurance. Shelter providers will provide SSHA representatives with reasonable access to the shelter premises and to financial and service records. Random audits of shelters may be conducted that will require bed logs to be provided when requested by SSHA representatives. Bed logs must be kept for a minimum of seven (7) years for auditing purposes.

During visits, SSHA representatives may wish to meet with shelter staff, Board/sub-committee members, volunteers and/or shelter clients.

Shelter providers will not introduce any ancillary services that detract or otherwise interfere with the effective delivery of their support services. If in doubt whether such ancillary services would detract or otherwise interfere, shelter providers will discuss such plans in advance with SSHA.

Shelter providers, including the Board of Directors, are responsible for ensuring that staff performance and accountability are properly monitored and evaluated.

### 12.2.3 Neighbourhood Issues

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved Good Neighbour policy and management-approved procedures to facilitate how the shelter engages, communicates and works with the surrounding community to foster a positive relationship
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

Shelter providers will provide the contact information for SSHA to any individual who wishes to make a complaint about a City of Toronto or an SSHA program, service or responsibility.

### 12.3 Conflict of Interest

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved conflict of interest policy and management-approved procedures for declaring and reporting a conflict of interest
- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

At a minimum, shelter staff and Board members

- (a) Will not use their positions to give anyone special treatment that would advance their own interests or that of any member of the employee's family, their friends or business associates
- (b) Will not accept gifts, money, discounts or favours including a benefit to family members, friends or business associates for doing work that the shelter provider pays them to do. The exceptions to this are promotional gifts or those of nominal value (e.g., coffee mug or letter opener with the company's logo)
- (c) Will not engage in any outside work or business activity that conflicts with their duties as shelter staff or Board member, which use their knowledge of confidential plans, projects or information about the organization's assets that will, or is likely to, negatively influence or affect them in carrying out their duties as shelter staff or Board member
- (d) Will not use, or permit the use of, the shelter provider's property, facilities, equipment, supplies or other resources for activities not associated with their work. Any exceptions to this must be expressly approved by either the Executive Director or the Chair of the Board
- (e) May not disclose confidential or privileged information about the property, or affairs of the organization, or use confidential information to advance personal or others' interests,

except in instances where the shelter staff or Board member is providing necessary information to allege or report wrongdoing on the part of the shelter provider or Board of Directors (i.e., whistle blowing)

- (f) Who knowingly have financial interests in a contract, purchase, sale or other business transaction with the shelter provider, or have family members, friends or business associates with such interests, will not represent or advise the shelter provider in such transactions.

#### **12.4 Human Resources**

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding staff hiring, training, and performance management
- (b) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding student/volunteer placements, and the scope of work and supervision requirements of students/ volunteers
- (c) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

Shelter providers will provide all new employees with an orientation or orientation information within the first five (5) days of their employment. At a minimum, the orientation information will cover key shelter policies, procedures and processes, including

- (a) Staff Code of Conduct
- (b) Client Rights and Responsibilities
- (c) Conflict of Interest policy
- (d) Key aspects of the shelter's business continuity plan, emergency plan and evacuation plan, including identifying emergency exits)
- (e) Infection Control Practices
- (f) AODA Customer Service Requirements, including service animals
- (g) Any other information that is immediately required for the employee to perform their work safely, effectively and professionally (e.g., food safety, use of personal protective equipment).



Shelter providers that permit volunteer and/or student placements will

- (a) Provide each volunteer/student with a shelter orientation similar to that provided to new employees as described under section 12.4 Human Resources, and which covers relevant information to their placement
- (b) Not give volunteer/student access to SMIS, as described in the Hostel Services Guidelines - SMIS Implementation (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources).

Shelter providers will recommend that all shelter staff consult a health care professional about updating their vaccinations (including annual Influenza vaccination) and completing a TB skin test.

Shelter staff will comply with requirements found under 12.4.1 Staff Code of Conduct.

#### 12.4.1 Staff Code of Conduct

Shelter providers will have a Board-approved Staff Code of Conduct that outlines acceptable, professional behaviour that applies to all staff. At a minimum, a Staff Code of Conduct will include the following

Shelter staff will

- (a) Acknowledge the power inherent in their position and work with a client-centered, anti-oppression approach
- (b) Act professionally, with integrity, objectivity and equity
- (c) Treat all individuals in a respectful, non-judgmental way
- (d) Follow the Toronto Shelter Standards
- (e) Explain the purpose of requests for a client's personal information
- (f) Ensure that clients have clear and accurate information in order to make informed decisions
- (g) Acknowledge that their workplace is a client's temporary home and attempt to minimize the impacts of their presence in sleeping areas and washrooms
- (h) Acknowledge when they are in a situation they are not adequately skilled to handle and seek support from their peers and supervisors
- (i) Strive to continuously update their professional knowledge and skills
- (j) Abide by all of the shelter's policies and procedures.

Shelter staff will not

- (a) Discriminate against any individual or group of individuals
- (b) Engage in violent, abusive or harassing behaviour
- (c) Impose personal beliefs or standards on others
- (d) Become involved in a client's personal life beyond the scope of their professional function
- (e) Have personal relations or accept gifts (except of nominal financial value) and/or services from current or former clients.

#### 12.4.2 Staff Training

An ongoing commitment to learning is important to ensure that shelter staff are able to perform their duties to the highest standards of professionalism and which are consistent with evidence-based leading practices. The TSS sets out minimum training requirements for shelter staff. Shelter providers are encouraged to exceed these standards.

Shelter providers will comply with all mandatory training requirements of applicable legislation.

Shelter providers will ensure that shelter staff have received or will receive training as described under Appendix B: Staff Training Matrix.

Staffing categories (e.g., client support staff, dietary staff, cleaning/maintenance staff, supervisory/management staff) are defined under section 3 Defined Terms and may not align with a shelter staff's actual title but are based on the staff person's responsibilities or functions.

Shelter providers may accept documentation from previously completed training or course work from a designated learning institution provided that they meet the requirements of section 12.4.2. Staff Training.

Shelter providers are not limited to arranging training through in-class instruction only, and may also access training content through other means (e.g., webinar, online modules, peer groups, etc.) provided that it is suitable to the learning style of the shelter staff being trained.

Shelter providers will seek training from agencies or trainers who are qualified to deliver training on the subject matter and can tailor the training content to a shelter-specific context, where possible.

Shelter providers may deliver in-house training on subjects/topics where they have the operational experience or subject matter expertise.

Shelter providers will keep training course/curriculum descriptions, manuals or any other documentation that describes the course content, the training methodology, the length/duration of

the training course(s) that have been completed by their staff. This documentation may be requested by SSHA representatives during any of the reviews described under 2.4.1 Program Reviews.

Shelter providers will ensure that shelter staff have received or will receive refresher training or update mandatory trainings no later than every five (5) years or the recertification period for their training (e.g., Standard First Aid), whichever is sooner.

Shelter providers will maintain an accurate training record for their staff and document all staff orientations and emergency drills/exercises that are conducted.

Training timelines indicated in Appendix B: Staff Training Matrix may be extended with prior approval from SSHA.

## **12.5 Documentation and Reporting**

Shelter providers will comply with all documentation and reporting requirements found in their Operating Agreement, the TSS and Hostel Services Directives.

### **12.5.1 SMIS**

Shelter providers will comply with the SMIS-related requirements found throughout the TSS, SMIS Privacy Guidelines (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources), SMIS User Agreement (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates), and their Operating Agreement.

Documentation and reporting timeframes may be extended to a maximum cumulative period of twelve (12) hours if SMIS is unavailable due to system interruptions (e.g., SMIS maintenance, power failure, internet access failure).

Shelter providers will ensure that all staff that use SMIS are aware of the manual back-up process in case of system interruptions and use of the hard copy forms (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates) until SMIS is available.

Shelter providers will immediately enter all information into SMIS as soon as SMIS is available.

### **12.5.2 Incident Reporting**

Shelter providers will document incidents in SMIS using the SMIS Incident Report module as soon as possible, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the incident.

If SMIS is not available, the incident must be documented in the hard copy version of the SMIS Incident Report form (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates) or in another manner that captures the same information as reported in the SMIS Incident Report form and entered in SMIS once it becomes available.

Serious occurrences will be immediately reported to SSHA.

Serious occurrences will be documented in the SMIS Incident Report form as soon as possible, but no later than twelve (12) hours after the incident.

The death of a shelter resident is a type of incident and will be reported immediately to SSHA, in accordance with the reporting requirements found in the [Reporting the Death of a Shelter Resident Guidebook](#) (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources).

Where a reportable incident or serious occurrence takes place before 8:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m., shelter providers will report the incident or serious occurrence to the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre.

### 12.5.3 Service Disruption

Shelter providers will immediately notify SSHA of any and all planned or unplanned service disruptions to provide information about the service disruption and the anticipated or actual impacts on shelter access and support services delivery.

If the need to contact SSHA arises before 8:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m., the shelter provider will contact the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre to notify them of the service disruption.

Shelter providers will submit a completed Shelter Service Disruption Notification form (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates), by fax or email to SSHA within twenty-four (24) hours of notifying SSHA.

If the reason for the service disruption involves a serious occurrence, shelter providers will complete and submit an incident report in a manner that complies with the requirements of section 12.5.2 Incident Reporting.

Shelter providers will post a notice of the disruption to advise shelter clients and the public of limitations to services, in a manner that complies with the requirements of Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Shelter providers will inform SSHA when the service disruption has ended and services have returned to normal functioning.

## 12.6 Confidentiality

### 12.6.1 Client Information and Files

Shelter providers will treat a client's personal and health information and client files as confidential information.

Shelter providers will

- (a) Have a Board-approved policy and management-approved procedures regarding the collection, storage, use, removal, disclosure and disposal of a client's personal and health information, which will include a privacy breach protocol

- (b) Submit a copy of the policy and procedures to SSHA, and resubmit a copy whenever the document(s) are updated or otherwise revised.

#### 12.6.2 Collection of Client Information

Shelter providers will inform clients of the SMIS Notice of Collection (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates) either verbally or by posting it in conspicuous areas where client information is regularly displayed (e.g., intake/admission area, counselor or case worker office).

Shelter providers collecting client information by phone for an intake must inform the client of the following, “Your personal information is collected under the authority of the City of Toronto Act and is used to provide shelter services and to administer social assistance programs. Questions about this collection can be directed to the SMIS Privacy Contact at 416-392-8741.”

Shelter providers will not request or collect immigration status information in order to determine service eligibility as part of a shelter's intake or admission process, unless approved by SSHA.

Shelter providers may request and collect immigration status information to assist clients to obtain or replace identification or determine eligibility for social assistance programs (e.g., Housing Help, housing subsidy programs, OW/ODSP, OAS, CPP) or services (e.g., health care) that require this information.

#### 12.6.3 Storage of Client Information

Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to safeguard hard-copy files containing a client's personal or health information including, but not limited to, storing the files in a secure location and in a locked container (e.g., locked cabinet in a locked office) and limiting access to the files to authorized shelter staff who require this information to provide support services.

Shelter providers will take all reasonable measures to safeguard electronic files containing a client's personal or health information and the storage medium for these files (e.g., computer, USB key), which may include, but is not limited to, password protecting the file, encrypting the file and limiting access to the files to authorized shelter staff who require this information to provide support services.

Removing confidential client files from the shelter premises or electronically transmitting confidential client information outside a secure network is discouraged.

Shelter providers that permit the physical removal or electronic transmission of confidential client information must identify the exceptional circumstances when and the manner by which confidential client-related information may be removed or transmitted to ensure the security, privacy and confidentiality of the information is maintained.

If client information must be removed or transmitted as part of the client's service plan, the information must be secured and moved/transmitted in a manner that will limit potential security, privacy and confidentiality breaches.

Shelter providers will report any actual or suspected breach of confidentiality with respect to client information to SSHA as soon as possible, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after becoming aware of the actual or suspected breach.

#### 12.6.4 Sharing/Disclosure of Client Information

Shelter providers will not disclose a client's personal or health information without first receiving the client's signed consent.

Shelter providers will work with clients to provide client-requested information about their records (e.g., hard-copy notes, SMIS information and records) in a manner that does not compromise the confidentiality of personal information of other clients or staff.

Requests for confidential personal and health information about a client may only be made by the client in question, or a person who is legally authorized to act on behalf of the client.

Sharing confidential client information with a service provider to which a client is referred or is receiving service, or a non-service provider (e.g., police, media, researcher, acquaintance of client who is not an authorized person acting on their behalf) is permitted with the client's consent and completed SMIS Client Consent form (see Appendix C: Forms and Templates).

All client consent documentation will be Board-approved, accurate, up-to-date and recorded in SMIS.

Shelter providers will permit the disclosure of a client's personal or health information to relevant authorities or persons, without the client's signed consent only when

- (a) Disclosure is permitted or required under legislation or regulation including, but not limited to the Criminal Code of Canada, Child and Family Services Act, 1990, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990, Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, Ontario Works Act, 1997, Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997
- (b) Disclosure is required pursuant to a court order or subpoena
- (c) Refusing or neglecting to provide personal or health information could endanger the safety of the client or others.

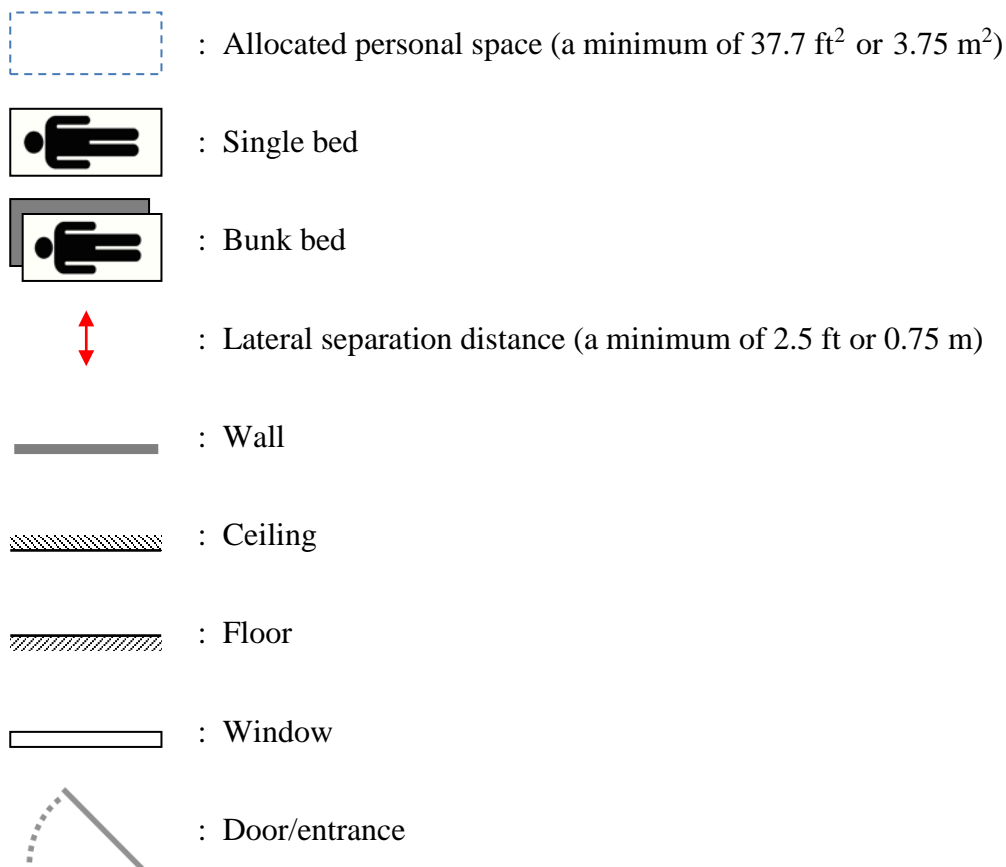
## Appendix A: Personal Space Requirements Examples

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The following examples illustrate

- Single bed configurations that comply with personal space requirements (i.e., a minimum of 37.7 ft<sup>2</sup> or 3.75 m<sup>2</sup> per person), with a minimum lateral separation distance of 2.5 ft (0.75 m) between closest sides of adjacent beds
- Bunk bed configurations that comply with personal space requirements;
- Separation distance between top and bottom bunks (i.e., a minimum of 3.5 ft (1.1 m) of overhead clearance).

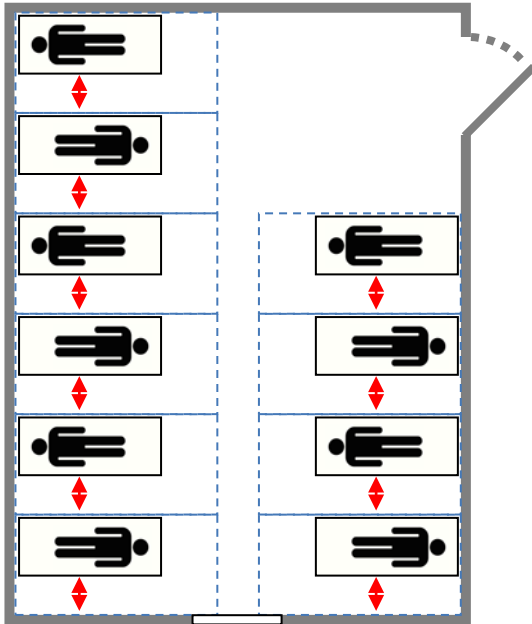
In the illustrated examples, the following symbols mean:



## Single Bed Configurations: Examples that Comply with Personal Space Requirements

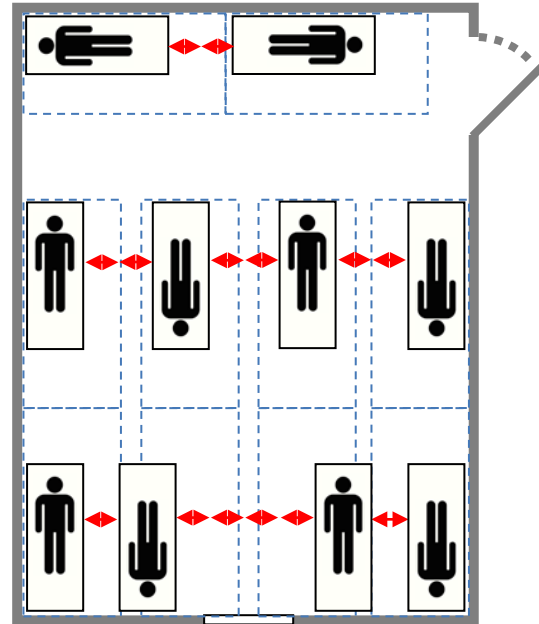
In the following examples, beds are arranged in an alternating 'head-to-toe' arrangement to minimize transmission of communicable diseases.

**Example A: 10 single beds / 10 clients**



- Example A meets the personal space requirements and separation distance requirements between beds.
- Example A allows for better flow of foot traffic (e.g., in event of evacuation) and facilitates more respectful (i.e., less disruptive) and efficient bed checks than example B.

**Example B: 10 single beds / 10 clients**



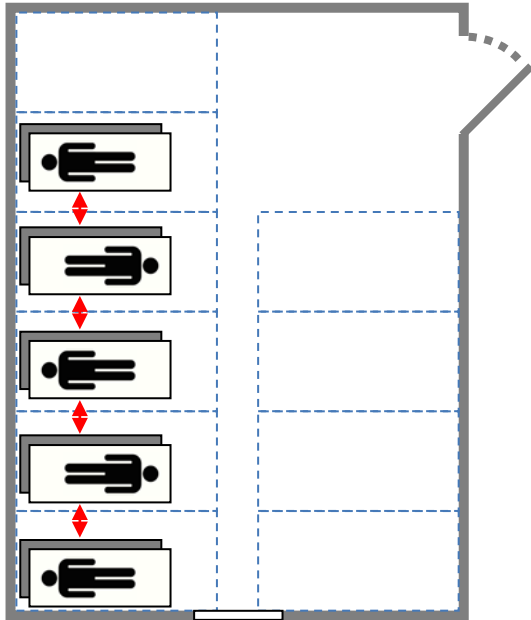
- Example B meets the personal space requirements and exceeds separation distance requirements between beds.
- Example B results in more obstructed flow (e.g., in event of evacuation) and may result in more disruptive bed checks.
- Beds nearest the window have been moved aside to allow adequate clearance around the window (e.g., facilitates easy access to window).



## Bunk Bed Configurations: Examples that Comply with Personal Space Requirements

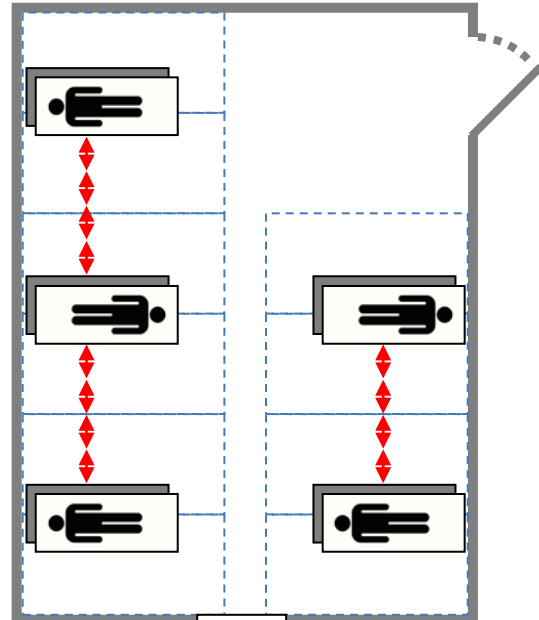
In the following examples, bunks are arranged in an alternating "head-to-toe" arrangement to minimize transmission of communicable diseases.

**Example C: 5 bunk beds / 10 clients**



- Example C meets the personal space requirements and separation distance requirements between beds.
- Example C places beds closer together to free up floor space. Since space standards apply per person, not per bed, the number of bunk beds is limited to 5. Therefore, the freed up floor space could be used to house lockers, dresser or other furniture, but not more beds.

**Example D: 5 bunk beds / 10 clients**

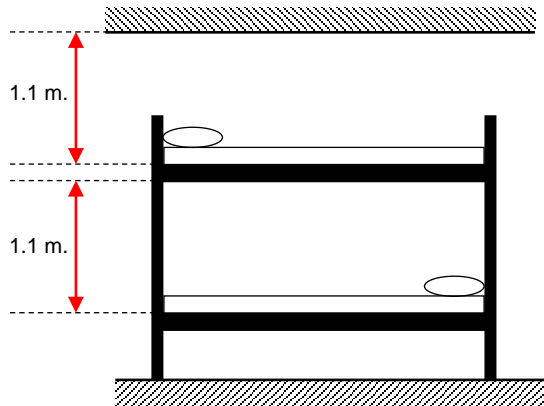


- Example D meets the personal space requirements and exceeds separation distance requirements between beds.

## Overhead Separation Distance: Bunk Beds

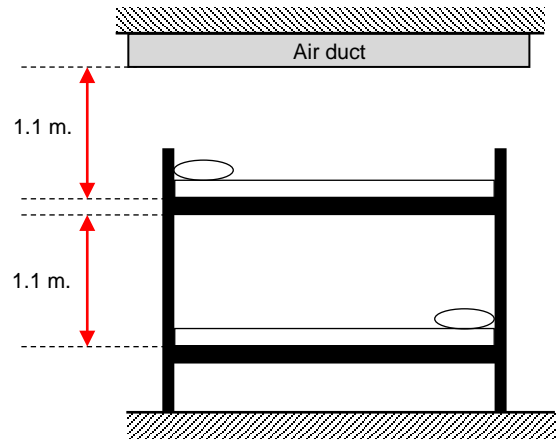
In the following examples, a minimum clearance of 3.5 ft (1.1 m) exists between the top of a bed frame to the lowest hanging section of an overhead object (e.g., upper bunk frame, light fixture, bulkhead, air duct, plumbing, etc.)

### Example E: Overhead Separation Distance



- The minimum overhead clearance for the lower bunk is measured from the top of the lower bunk frame to the underside of the upper bunk frame.
- The minimum overhead clearance for the upper bunk is measured from the top of the upper bunk frame to the underside of the ceiling.

### Example F: Overhead Separation Distance



- The minimum overhead clearance for the lower bunk is measured from the top of the lower bunk frame to the underside of the upper bunk frame.
- The minimum overhead clearance for the upper bunk is measured from the top of the upper bunk frame to the underside of the air duct.

## Appendix B: Staff Training Matrix

The following matrix is for quick reference only and must be read in conjunction with the requirements of sections: **11, 11.1, 11.2, 11.4.1, 12.4** and **12.4.2 Staff Training**.

**M** = mandatory training  
**R** = recommended training

<sup>F</sup> = applies only to family shelters

<sup>Y</sup> = applies only to youth shelters

	<b>Mandatory Training Timeframe</b> (from start date of employment)	<b>Client Support Staff</b>	<b>Dietary Staff</b>	<b>Cleaning / Maintenance Staff</b>	<b>Supervisory / Management Staff</b>
<b>Professionalism / Customer Service</b>					
Conflict of Interest	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Customer Service	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Ethics & Professional Boundaries	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Managing in a Unionized Environment	-	-	-	-	<b>R</b>
Partnership Development	6 months	<b>R</b>	-	-	<b>M</b>
Program Development & Evaluation	-	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	-	<b>R</b>
Self Care/Compassion Fatigue	-	<b>R</b>	-	-	<b>R</b>
<a href="#">Shelter/Workplace Orientation</a>	5 days	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Shelter Standards	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Supervisory Skills	6 months	-	-	-	<b>M</b>
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>					
Bed Bug Control	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>
Child Safety & Injury Prevention	3 months	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	-	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>
Communicable Disease (infection control)	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Conflict Resolution	12 months	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>

**M** = mandatory training  
**R** = recommended training

<sup>F</sup> = applies only to family shelters

<sup>Y</sup> = applies only to youth shelters

	<b>Mandatory Training Timeframe</b> (from start date of employment)	<i>Client Support Staff</i>	<i>Dietary Staff</i>	<i>Cleaning / Maintenance Staff</i>	<i>Supervisory / Management Staff</i>
Crisis Prevention and Verbal De-escalation	6 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Emergency Plan/Evacuation Plan	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Standard First Aid and CPR Certification	6 months	Refer to requirements found in section 11 (Health and Safety)			
Food Handler's Certification	3 months	-	<b>M</b>	-	-
Food Premises Regulations	3 months	-	<b>M</b>	-	-
Food Safety	3 months	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	-	-
Health & Safety	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Injury Prevention	6 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Mental Health in the Workplace	-	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>
Use of Personal Protective Equipment	3 months (cleaning)	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Psychological First Aid	-	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>
WHMIS	12 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Equity, Diversity and Human Rights</b>					
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability (AODA)	6 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression	6 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
LGBTQ2S Cultural Competency/ LGBTQ2S Youth Inclusion/ Trans Awareness	6 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Working with Clients</b>					

**M** = mandatory training  
**R** = recommended training

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<sup>Y</sup> = applies only to youth shelters

	<b>Mandatory Training Timeframe</b> (from start date of employment)	<b>Client Support Staff</b>	<b>Dietary Staff</b>	<b>Cleaning / Maintenance Staff</b>	<b>Supervisory / Management Staff</b>
Behaviour Management	6 months	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	-	-	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>
Case Management/Service Planning	3 months	<b>M</b>	-	-	<b>R</b>
Counselling Skills or Motivational Interviewing	3 months	<b>M</b>	-	-	-
Criminal Justice System	-	<b>R</b>	-	-	<b>R</b>
Documentation	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Duty to Report	3 months	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>
Finances and Income Supports after Age 65	-	<b>R</b>	-	-	-
Harm Reduction (Substance Use and Overdose)	3 months	<b>M</b>	-	-	<b>M</b>
Mental Health	12 months	<b>M</b>	-	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Nutrition Standards (Nutrition through Life Cycle, Nutrition for	6 months	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	-	<b>M</b>
Pet First Aid	-	<b>R</b>	-	-	-
Shelter Management Information System (SMIS)	3 months	<b>M</b>	-	-	<b>M</b>
Suicide Intervention	-	<b>R</b>	-	-	<b>R</b>
Teenage Brain/Working with Youth	3 months	<b>M<sup>Y</sup></b>	-	-	<b>M<sup>Y</sup></b>
Trauma-informed Care	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Working with Abused Women & Children	-	<b>R<sup>F</sup></b>	-	-	<b>R<sup>F</sup></b>
Working with Families in Shelters	3 months	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>	-	-	<b>M<sup>F</sup></b>
Working with Older/Aging Clients	-	<b>R</b>	-	-	<b>R</b>

**M** = mandatory training  
**R** = recommended training

<sup>F</sup> = applies only to family shelters

<sup>Y</sup> = applies only to youth shelters

	<b>Mandatory Training Timeframe</b> (from start date of employment)	<i>Client Support Staff</i>	<i>Dietary Staff</i>	<i>Cleaning / Maintenance Staff</i>	<i>Supervisory / Management Staff</i>
Working with People who have Disabilities	3 months	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>

## Appendix C: Forms and Templates

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- (a) [SMIS Admission form](#)
- (b) [SMIS Bed Check log](#)
- (c) [SMIS Case Management Notes form](#)
- (d) [SMIS Client Consent form](#)
- (e) [SMIS Client Discharge form](#)
- (f) [SMIS Client Intake form](#)
- (g) [SMIS Service Restriction form](#)
- (h) [SMIS User Agreement](#)
- (i) SMIS Per Diem Submission Claim form (*available by request*)
- (j) SMIS Incident Report form (*available by request*)
- (k) [SMIS Notice of Collection](#)
  - i. SMIS Notice of Collection ([French Version](#))
  - ii. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Arabic Version](#))
  - iii. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Chinese Version](#))
  - iv. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Dari Version](#))
  - v. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Farsi Version](#))
  - vi. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Hungarian Version](#))
  - vii. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Korean Version](#))
  - viii. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Polish Version](#))
  - ix. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Punjabi Version](#))
  - x. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Russian Version](#))
  - xi. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Spanish Version](#))
  - xii. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Tamil Version](#))
  - xiii. SMIS Notice of Collection ([Vietnamese Version](#))
- (l) [Audited Statement of Shelter Operations template form](#)
- (m) [Delegation of Signing Authority form](#)
- (n) [Death of Shelter Resident Reporting form](#)
- (o) [Leave with Permission form](#)
- (p) [Shelter Service Disruption Notification form](#)

## **Appendix D: Links to References and Resources**

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- (a) [Housing Opportunities Toronto and the Toronto Housing Charter](#)
- (b) [Housing Stability Service Planning Framework](#)
- (c) [Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Your Duty](#)
- (d) [Reporting the Death of a Shelter Resident Guidebook](#)
- (e) [Canada's Food Guide](#)
  - i. Canada's Food Guide ([French Version](#))
  - ii. Canada's Food Guide ([Arabic Version](#))
  - iii. Canada's Food Guide ([Chinese Version](#))
  - iv. Canada's Food Guide ([Farsi Version](#))
  - v. Canada's Food Guide ([Korean Version](#))
  - vi. Canada's Food Guide ([Punjabi Version](#))
  - vii. Canada's Food Guide ([Russian Version](#))
  - viii. Canada's Food Guide ([Spanish Version](#))
  - ix. Canada's Food Guide ([Tagalog Version](#))
  - x. Canada's Food Guide ([Tamil Version](#))
  - xi. Canada's Food Guide ([Urdu Version](#))
- (f) [Food Safety: A Guide for Ontario's Food Handlers](#)
- (g) [Hostel Services Staff Safety Guide](#)
- (h) [Housekeeping Manual for Municipally Operated Shelters](#)
- (i) [Bedbugs: A Handbook for Shelter Operators](#)
- (j) [Hostel Services Guidelines - SMIS Implementation](#)
- (k) [SMIS Privacy Guidelines](#)
- (l) [The Works Harm Reduction Program](#)
- (m) [Toronto Public Health List of Harm Reduction Supplies Locations](#)